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RING

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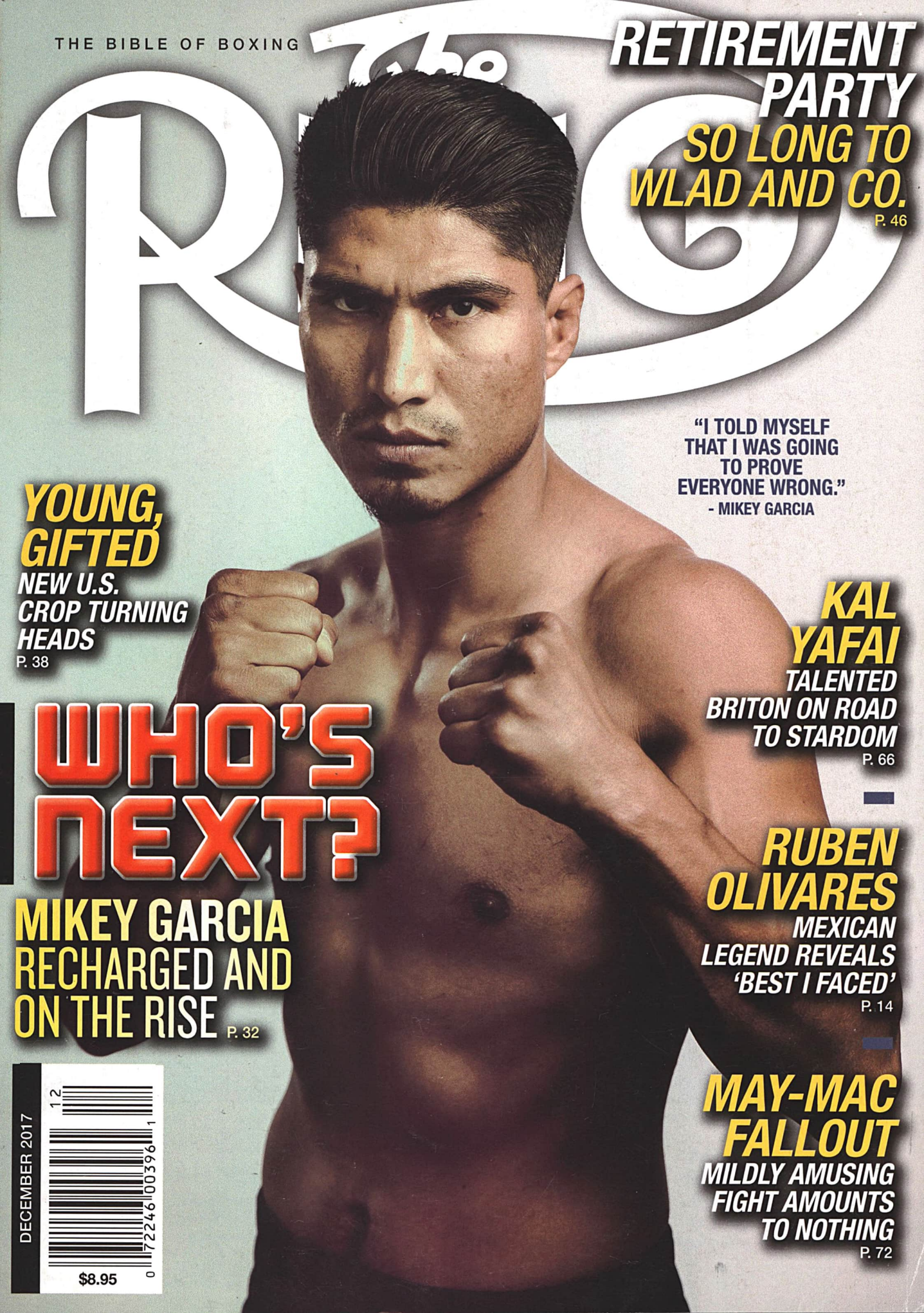

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Terence Crawford (above) stands out in a crowd, at least among elite boxers. He leads a new crop of talented American boxers.

MIKEY WILLIAMS/TOP RANK

COVER PHOTO BY AMANDA WESTCOTT

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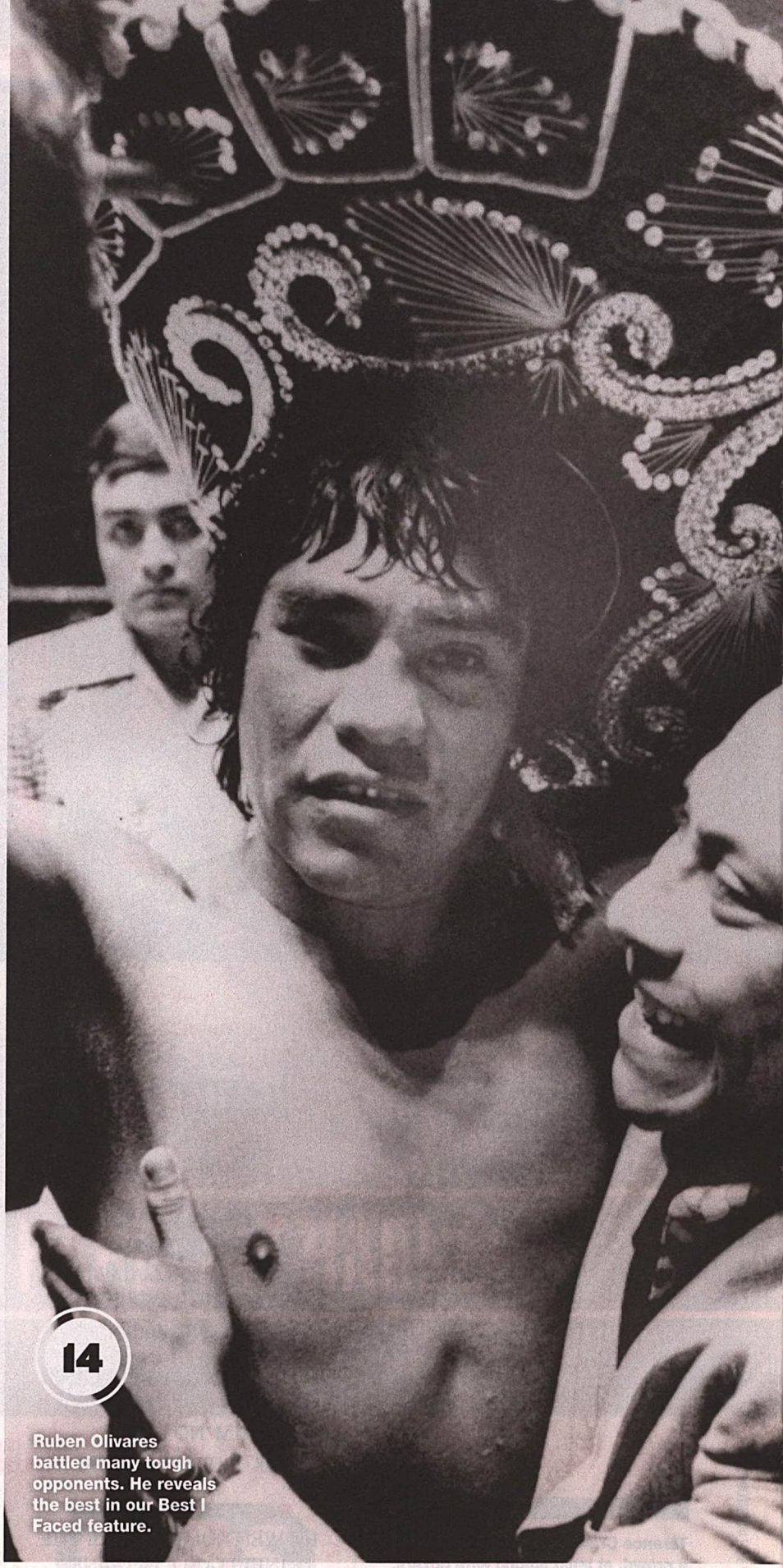

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Ruben Olivares battled many tough opponents. He reveals the best in our Best I Faced feature.

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The RING

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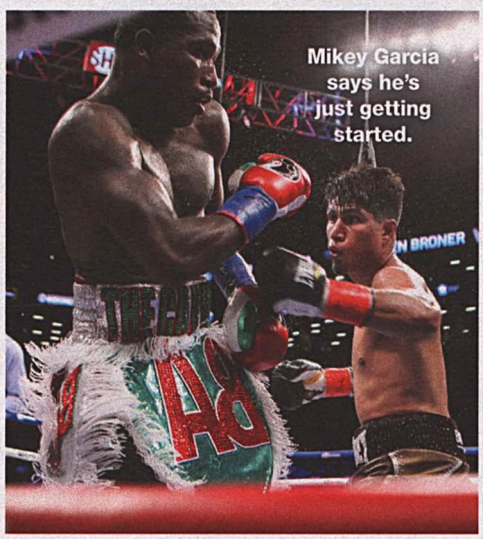
MIKEY GARCIA 2.0

The departure of Floyd

Mayweather Jr. and the decline of Manny Pacquiao have opened the door for other, younger fighters to contend for a lofty distinction: No. 1 boxer pound-for-pound.

Andre Ward occupies the throne at the moment, having built a sturdy resume and perfect record over many years. Others are poised to overtake him if he falters, though. Vasyl Lomachenko and Terence Crawford probably top that list but there are other up-and-comers, including Canelo Alvarez (at the time of this writing), Errol Spence and Naoya Inoue.



And there's Mikey Garcia, our cover subject this month.

Garcia (37-0, 30 knockouts) has a strong boxing pedigree. He witnessed first-hand the championship runs of Fernando Vargas and older brother Robert Garcia, who were trained by the patriarch of the family, Eduardo Garcia.

The boy obviously absorbed the best of what he saw. He's a superb technical boxer with concussive power, a rare combination that could lead him to the top of the heap.

Garcia's career can be divided neatly into two parts. In the first, he steamrolled anyone who got in his way en route to winning world titles at both featherweight and junior lightweight and establishing himself as a rising star.

And then he went away for 2½ years, the result of a dispute with former promoter Top Rank.

Some wondered whether he was finished. And if he came back, they mused, would he resemble the fighter he had been? These were legitimate questions, given the length of his hiatus.

Well, it turns out Garcia is the same fighter – and perhaps then some. He left no doubt about that in his most recent fight, a sensational, one-sided decision over Adrian Broner at the unfamiliar weight of 140 pounds on July 29.

The reviews of his performance and his future prospects couldn't have been much more positive, which played a role in our decision to feature him on the cover.

I had the pleasure of traveling to now-trainer Robert Garcia's Riverside, California, gym to interview Mikey for the cover story. He took me on a tour of his life and career, his motivations and his goals as he approaches 30 years old.

I found him to be as engaging and down-to-earth as Robert was when I covered his boxing career, which says something about the way Eduardo and his wife raised their boys. And one thing was striking: Mikey's intelligence.

Now, free from Top Rank, Mikey Garcia is in full control of his career and it appears to be in good hands. I don't want to divulge too much here – please read the story on Page 32 – but I can say this: He's thinking big – very big.

And it's not difficult to understand why.

AP: GARCIA: TOM CASINO

Terence Crawford (right) unified five titles and won more accolades with his knockout victory over Julius Indongo on August 19.

MIKEY WILLIAMS/TOP RANK

COME OUT WRITING

GLAD IT'S OVER WITH

I'm happy to have my sport back to myself. I'm happy to have all of the MMA fans, casual observers and all who were fooled by the barrage of clips, trash talk and advertising that preceded the event. Floyd Mayweather-Conor McGregor played out almost exactly how we imagined it would. For all the credit given to McGregor, and all the "stats" claiming he landed X more punches than Y boxers, it was never a competitive fight. Prior to the "bout" I tried to communicate to the boxing experts that boxing power differs from MMA power. Boxing is all about impulse and snap. How would it be possible for a non-boxer, wearing gloves twice the size of his sport, to do anything against the best of his generation? The simple answer was it wasn't possible. But kudos to the circus for announcing its show far and wide. It's always nice to pick up new fans for boxing, but I would rather have given McGregor a chance to fight Mayweather away from the sweet science.

Fernando Zapari
Fort Wayne, Indiana

EATING CROW

Ever since the Mayweather vs. McGregor fight was announced, I hated it. I was frustrated that McGregor could just step into the ring in his debut boxing match and get a shot at Mayweather. The fact that Mayweather would obtain the legendary 50-0 record by participating in this circus made veins pop out of my forehead as well. The night of the fight, I was at a bachelor party but we had access to the match. The fight that I had so vehemently promised to protest was on for free. And you know what? I actually found it entertaining. Don't get me wrong; it wasn't the "Thrilla in Manila," but it was far better than I could have anticipated. So you'll have to excuse me while I finish eating my plate of crow.

Davis Clouse
Omaha, Nebraska

FEELING FORTUNATE

I feel lucky growing up during the boxing era that I did. Hearing of the retirements of Wladimir Klitschko, Juan Manuel Marquez, Tim Bradley, Shane Mosley, Miguel Cotto (after his next fight) and even Floyd Mayweather is a bittersweet moment. I'm sad to see these warriors go but, at the same time, I'm proud to see them off into retirement because they gave blood, sweat and tears that fed my passion for boxing. If and when I have kids, I'll tell them about the fights I got to watch with my dad. And thanks to the internet, they'll be able to see them for themselves. It's the end of an era, but what a great era it was.

Erich Edmonds
Clermont, Florida

SO LONG, WLAD

I am pleased Wladimir Klitschko announced his retirement. He gained more respect in his fight with Anthony Joshua in losing than he did in a lot of his victories; such was the nature of an epic fight that will remain legendary. He put Joshua down, but in the end he was mauled. Two Brits (Tyson Fury and Joshua) showed the end was coming. But he carried the sport with great dignity. There are not many like him in that regard. He is intelligent enough to retire and leave it at that and enter a new future for himself. Good wishes to him. And it will be a long time before we see another event like Joshua vs. Klitschko. The hair still stands up on the back of my neck at the mention of it.

Ray Fox
Keighley, England

PERFECT TIMING

It would've been nice to see Wladmir Klitschko have a rematch with Anthony Joshua, because it was a cracking fight. It had a bit of everything. But he has retired at the right time, while he is still healthy. He had a good career. He will be remembered as one of the top boxers of his time and as a respectful gentleman.

Craig Roberts
Ruthin, North Wales

A NEW ERA

People need to let Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather's names go. Let them do what they want to do; they both solidified their place in history. It's a new era. A lot of bright young stars are rising in a lot of weight classes. I can't wait to see Vasyl Lomachenko and Terence Crawford in their next bouts.

Errol Ian Ave Acosta
Okinawa, Japan

ALI'S GIFT TO WEPNER

I recently watched the Muhammad Ali-Chuck Wepner fight from March 24, 1975, for the first time, as I have developed an interest in Ali's last years of boxing. What stood out the most to me is Ali's arrogance, leading him to underestimate his opponent and make mistakes. Ali was clearly the better boxer despite Wepner's courage and heart. Ali's handspeed and quick reflexes outmatched Wepner's slow, plodding style of punching. The only reason the match did not end until the 15th round is that Ali didn't take his opponent seriously until halfway through, which inadvertently gave the world a chance to see Chuck Wepner's toughness for almost 45 minutes and gave Wepner a sports legacy that he otherwise would not have had.

Josiah Marineau
Campbellsville, Kentucky

CORRECTION

Dominic Wade was misidentified in a photo that appeared on Page 53 of the November 2017 issue. THE RING regrets the error.

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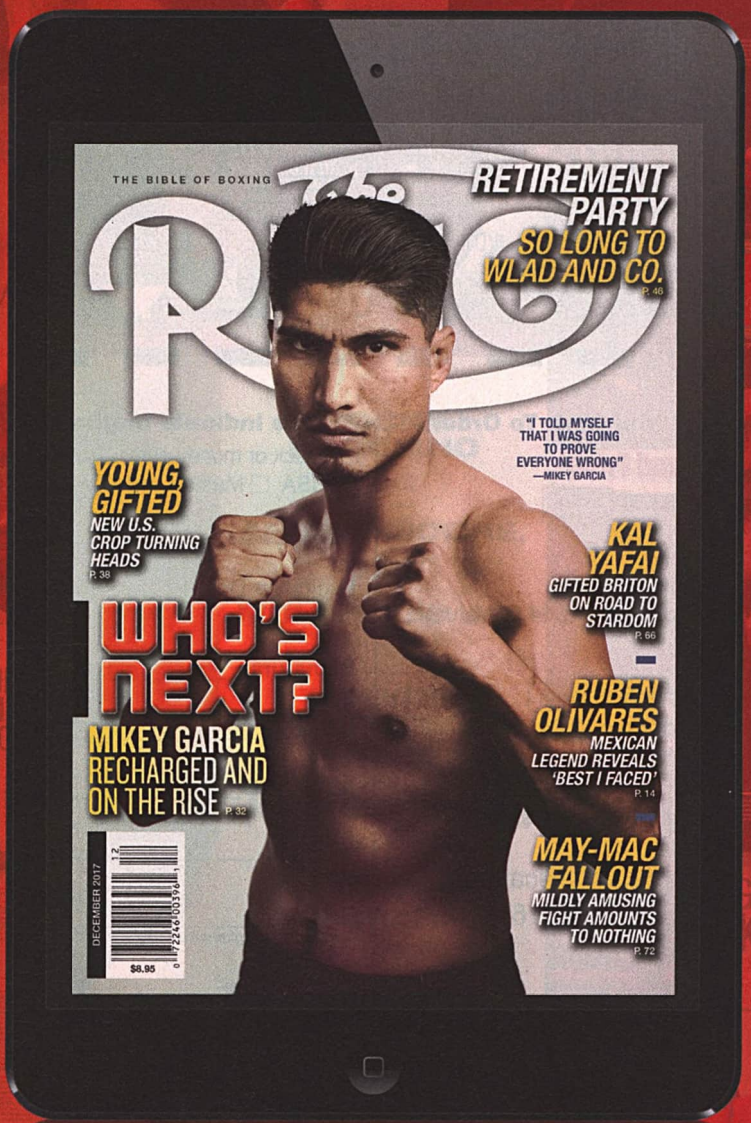

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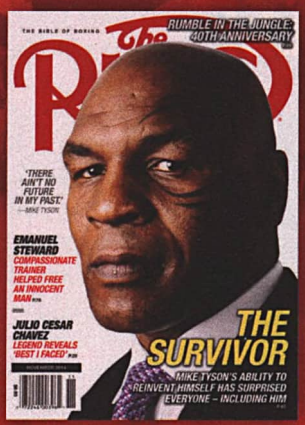

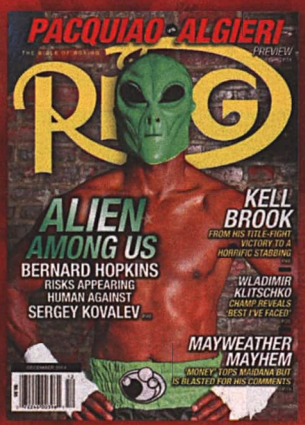

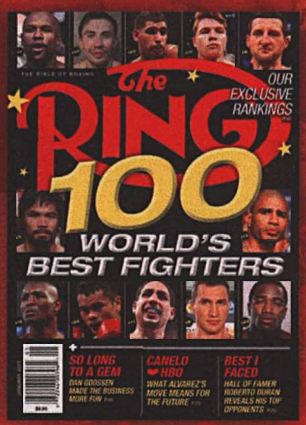

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ADVANCED DEGREES

Rocky Marciano (left) now has the second-best final record in boxing history.

MARCIANO: HULTON ARCHIVES; MAYWEATHER: AP PHOTO/ISAAC BREKKEN

Degrees of separation between fighters of the past and their more contemporary counterparts. This month, regular contributor Gregg Morgan recognized Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s achievement of retiring with a record of 50-0 – bettering the 49-0 of Rocky Marciano – by linking the two fighters.

ROCKY MARCIANO
fought

ARCHIE MOORE,
who fought

MUHAMMAD ALI,
who fought

TREVOR BERBICK,
who fought

IRAN BARKLEY,
who fought

ROBERTO DURAN,
who fought

HECTOR CAMACHO SR.,
who fought

OSCAR DE LA HOYA,
who fought

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.

10

A MONTHLY BOXING LIST

This month: Too many great fighters stick around too long and sully their records in the process. In this list, we correct the mistakes of 10 such fighters. We show you three things: what would've been the ideal fight on which to go out, won-lost record after that fight and the actual final fight.

Muhammad Ali
Ideal: Ken Norton UD W (3-3); **Actual:** Trevor Berbick UD L

Sugar Ray Leonard
Ideal: Donny Lalonde TKO 9 W (1-2-1); **Actual:** Hector Camacho TKO 5 L

Roberto Duran
Ideal: Iran Barkley SD W (18-9); **Actual:** Hector Camacho UD L

Thomas Hearns
Ideal: Virgil Hill UD W (11-2); **Actual:** Shannon Landberg TKO 10 W

Shane Mosley
Ideal: Antonio Margarito TKO 9 (3-5-1); **Actual:** David Avanesyan UD L

Oscar De La Hoya
Ideal: Floyd Mayweather Jr. SD L (1-1); **Actual:** Manny Pacquiao TKO 8 L

Roy Jones Jr.
Ideal: John Ruiz UD 12 W (17-8); **Actual:** Bobby Gunn TKO 8 W

Bernard Hopkins
Ideal: Beibut Shumenov SD W (0-2); **Actual:** Joe Smith Jr. KO 8 L

James Toney
Ideal: Evander Holyfield TKO 9 W (10-6-1); **Actual:** Mike Sheppard KO 6 W

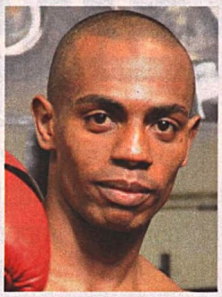
Evander Holyfield
Ideal: John Ruiz I UD 12 W (7-6-1); **Actual:** Brian Nielsen TKO 10 W

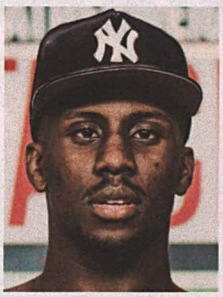
Note: Jones and Toney are still active.

FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

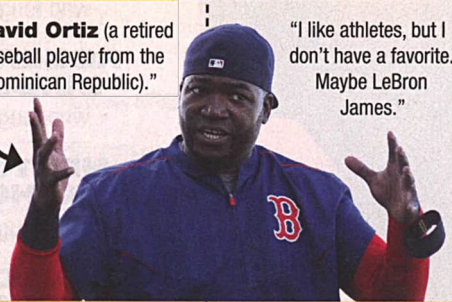
WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT

— Anson Wainwright

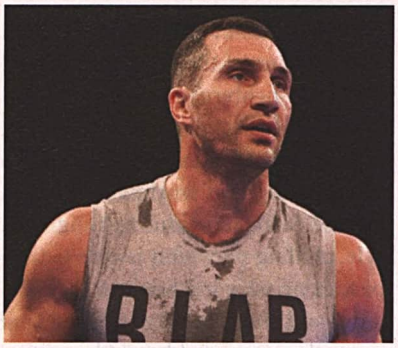




FIGHTER »	JONATHAN GUZMAN JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT CONTENDER	TEVIN FARMER JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT CONTENDER	ANTHONY YIGIT JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT CONTENDER
MUSIC »	"Merengue."	"R&B, slow jam."	"I like mostly pop music."
CAR »	"I drive a Mitsubishi Lancer, but my dream car will be a Porsche."	"I drive a Grand Prix. I don't really have a dream car. I would say maybe a Bentley."	"My dream car is a Lamborghini Aventador."
FOOD »	"Rice with beans and steak."	"Chicken Alfredo."	"Any sort of pasta with Parmesan."
TATTOOS »	"No."	"They're all on my arms. My mom's name, 'North Philly,' 'Love' and 'Hate,' and 'I am a man bowed down.'"	"No tattoos."
ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING »	"David Ortiz (a retired baseball player from the Dominican Republic)."	"I like athletes, but I don't have a favorite. Maybe LeBron James."	"Zlatan Ibrahimovic."
MOVIE »	"'Bruce Almighty.'"	"I don't watch movies."	"'The Karate Kid' (the first one)."
VIDEO GAME »	"'Super Mario Bros.'"	"I don't play video games."	"'The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim.'"



THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH By Michael Rosenthal

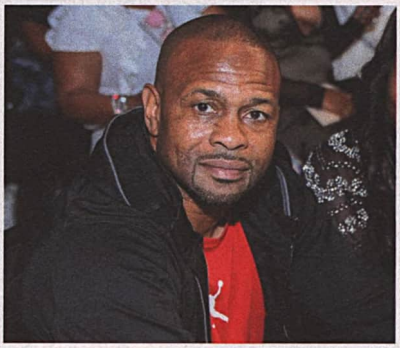


GOOD

The spate of retirements over the past month made our collective head spin. The sport lost a number of accomplished champions at the same time, including **Wladimir Klitschko, Shane Mosley, Juan Manuel Marquez, Tim Bradley and Robert Guerrero.** Retirement is a personal decision based on a variety of factors (including money) – and one best left to the fighters and their families – but I want to applaud what I believe are wise decisions. Klitschko, Bradley and Marquez were wise. Klitschko could've engaged Anthony Joshua in a lucrative rematch. Instead, he was content to go out after a valiant effort in defeat and his faculties intact. He will have finished with consecutive losses – against Tyson Fury and Joshua – but his legacy is strong. Bradley, 34, was still an elite fighter when he announced his retirement. He simply decided he had taken his fair share of punches and had accomplished enough. Sensible. Marquez, 44, was in danger of hanging on too long but walked away without having embarrassed himself. I would hope that more fighters would look to Klitschko, Bradley and Marquez when contemplating retirement.

BAD

Shane Mosley, who turned 46 on September 7, wasn't Mosley in his last few fights. The fighter we came to know had otherworldly tools – speed, athleticism and power – to go with an unusual fighting spirit, which produced one of the best fighters of his generation. That was then. In recent fights, he was a relatively slow, plodding fighter whose muscle memory had begun to forget. He went 3-5-1 in his last nine fights over seven-plus years, a record unbecoming of a fighter with his talent. He lost a unanimous decision in his final fight against a pretty good opponent in David Avanesyan but one he would've destroyed nearer his prime, stark evidence that he was clinging precariously to boxing. Mosley clearly loves what he has done the past four decades. To give it up permanently must feel like he's giving up a limb. The problem was that his limbs and other parts of his body would no longer cooperate, which finally prompted him to say goodbye. He made a lot of money during his 3-5-1 run but I wonder whether a part of him will regret his final years in the sport. At least he got out before Roy Jones Jr.



WORSE

I remember **Roy Jones Jr.** as a force of nature, a ridiculously quick, athletic fighter who made even good fighters – from middleweights to a heavyweight – look foolish. That was a long, looooong time ago. Again, Jones has a right to continue fighting if he so chooses and meets physical standards even though he's 48 and a shell of what he was. He has his reasons – love of the sport, money, whatever – for continuing. Of course, he's not alone. Many of the greatest champions fought well beyond their expiration date. And, yes, he can go on beating the Rodney Moores and Bobby Gunns of the boxing world until he's 60 or older. I don't have to like it, though. I will in time think back on Jones as he was when he beat Bernard Hopkins and James Toney, when he crushed Montell Griffin in their rematch, when he dominated heavyweight titleholder John Ruiz. In the present, though, it's painful to know that what remains of Jones continues to exchange punches with those who mean to hurt him. The physical attributes that made Jones special are gone; now he is just an average, vulnerable fighter with a big name. Sad to see.

RING POLL

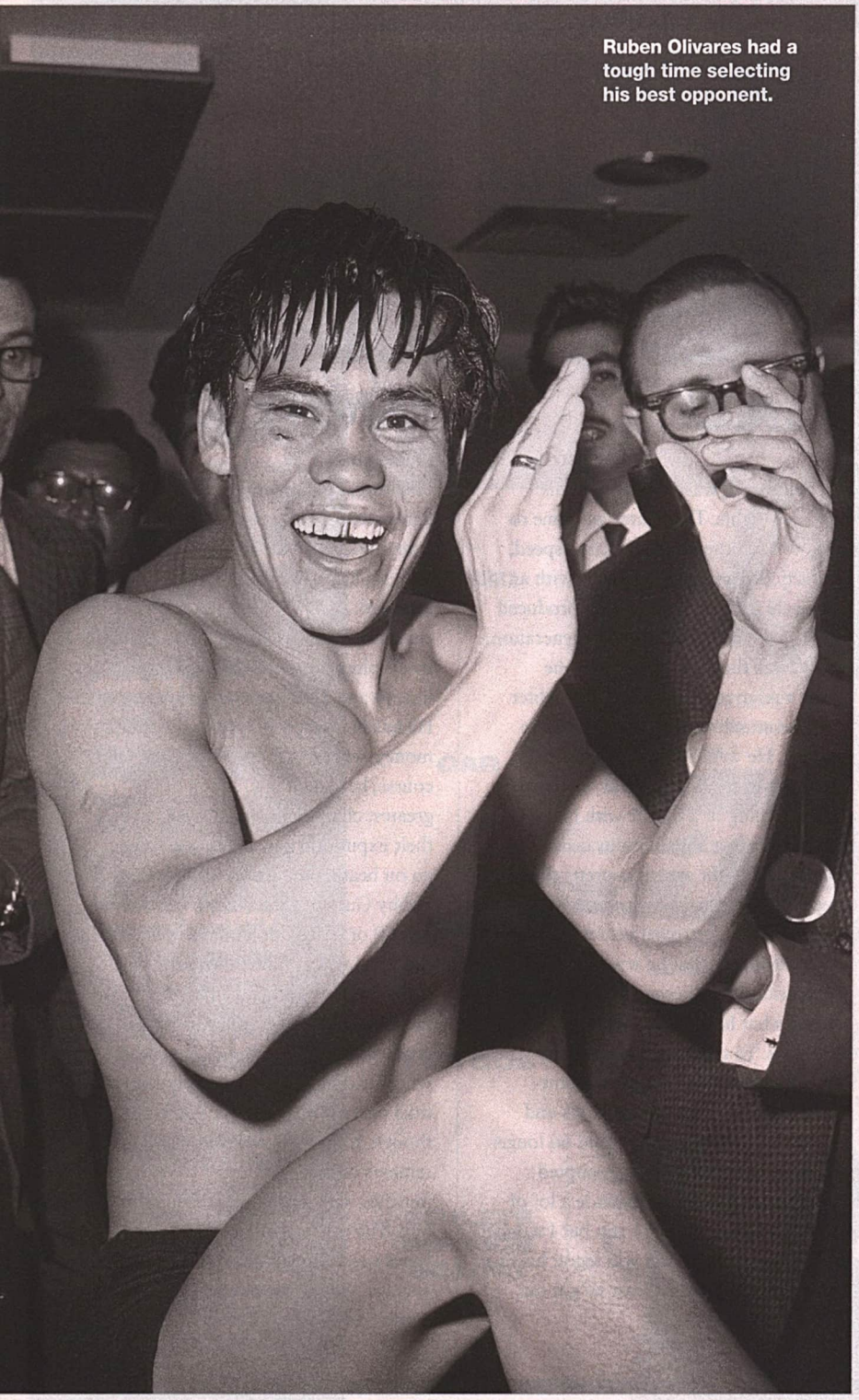
A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS

A number of young fighters seem to have the ability to rise to the top of the boxing world. With that in mind, we asked: **Which 30-or-younger star is likely to become the No. 1 fighter pound-for-pound?** Here is how you responded.

THE PERCENTAGES

32.31	VASYL LOMACHENKO	1.55	OTHER	.69	OLEKSANDR USYK
26.17	TERENCE CRAWFORD	1.36	NAOYA INOUE	.34	KHALID YAFAI
13.71	CANELO ALVAREZ	1.36	KEITH THURMAN	.24	MURAT GASSIEV
8.43	ERROL SPENCE	1.14	GERVONTA DAVIS	.24	OLEKSANDR GVOZDYK
5.84	ANTHONY JOSHUA	.93	DAVID BENAVIDEZ		
4.91	MIKEY GARCIA	.78	JERMALL CHARLO		

NOTE: 4,639 READERS VOTED



Ruben Olivares had a tough time selecting his best opponent.

RUBEN OLIVARES

89-13-3 (79 KOs)

Ruben Olivares is remembered fondly as one of the most exciting – and best – fighters in history.

Olivares became immensely popular among Mexicans and action-loving fans worldwide because of his ferocious fighting style, chilling punching power (particularly his left hook to the body) and winning ways over a career that extended beyond two decades.

All but 17 of his 105 fights ended in a knockout (either of his opponent or himself), which made for many thrilling nights. He finished with a record of 89-13-3 (79 knockouts) and once had a record of 61-0-1 (58 KOs), an indication of how dominating he was in his prime.

Olivares ultimately had four title reigns – including two as RING champion – over two divisions.

"Look at his number of knockouts," the late Hall of Fame writer Bert Sugar once told THE RING. "He was a dual champion. He was never in an unexciting fight. He had a left hook from hell. Everything about him said 'great fighter.'"

Olivares turned pro a few days shy of his 18th birthday, in 1965, scoring the first of 24 consecutive knockouts to start his career.

The native of Mexico City punched his way up the bantamweight rankings before winning his first titles by stopping WBA and WBC beltholder Lionel Rose in the fifth round at the Forum in Inglewood, California, an arena in which he fought 22 times.

He considers that his proudest moment in boxing.

Olivares would go on to face some of the biggest names in the late 1960s and '70s, an era filthy rich with exciting fighters in the lower weight divisions.

He defeated Chucho Castillo in two of three classic wars, winning and regaining his titles in the process. He split two memorable

ASSOCIATED PRESS

fights with Art Hafey, including a knockout loss. He lost his WBA featherweight title to the great Alexis Arguello by stoppage. He won two of three fights against Hall of Famer Bobby Chacon, including a second-round KO that gave him the WBC featherweight title.

And, it seemed, he never let down fans hoping to be entertained.

Olivares' last great victory was a second-round knockout of future star Jose Luis Ramirez in 1978, the only time the iron-jawed Mexican was stopped. Olivares initially retired in 1981, made one-fight comebacks in 1986 and 1988 and then left the sport for good.

"Looking back, there are three men that I would have liked to have fought," Olivares told THE RING through representative Gene Aguilera. "Of all the fighters from Mexico, I would have loved to face Rodolfo Martinez, the former bantamweight world champion. I tried to get the fight but it never got made. I really would have liked to have fought Eder Jofre and Vicente Saldivar because they had big names."

Olivares, now 70, lives in Mexico City with his wife and has six grown children. He is still greeted with spirited applause at boxing events and keeps a foot in the sport. He said he trains a few boxers.

"I am looking for the next Ruben Olivares, with the left hook to the liver!" he said.

That isn't likely.

FASTEST HANDS

Chucho Castillo: We fought three times at the Fabulous Forum and went a total of 44 brutal rounds. I believe our trilogy defined both our careers. Chucho gave me my first defeat when the ring doctor stopped the fight in the 14th round because of a bad eye cut. His punches came at me really fast. Castillo had a lot of handspeed and he hit very hard.

BEST FOOTWORK

Kazuyoshi Kanazawa: Kanazawa really moved around a lot. He knew how to work the ropes really good.

BEST CHIN

Art Hafey: I fought Hafey the first time in Monterrey in 1973. I underestimated him at the time and figured it would be an easy win in Mexico. I remember seeing him at the hotel lobby early one morning. As he was getting ready to leave to do his morning roadwork, I was just getting back from a night of partying. In the fifth round, Hafey put me to sleep – a deep sleep.

STRONGEST

Eusebio Pedroza: At age 32, I made my final attempt to win a world title against him. He was younger and very strong, like a bull. His punches were really hard. We tried our best and made it to the 12th round, when I got knocked out.

SMARTEST

Pedroza: He was a master at slipping punches. I could never hit him because I couldn't find him. He moved around so much.

BEST JAB

Alexis Arguello: This was the first defense of my featherweight title. ... I was winning the fight through the first 12 rounds, pushing Arguello around, landing on him, staggering him at times. But he had the best jab I ever faced. When he threw his jab, he was always moving around. He had a very sharp, direct jab.

BEST PUNCHER

Arguello: Arguello stood his ground and then let go of his punches. He hit really hard. I think because I was a natural bantam that moved up to feather – and he was basically a lightweight that moved down to feather – that he was a lot stronger than me. He had explosive power. ... I got careless in the 13th, got caught with an uppercut, and instead of trying to shake the cobwebs, I went at him. Big mistake.

BEST DEFENSE

Kanazawa: He had a great defense and he was fast. I fought Kanazawa twice, once in Mexico and the other time in Japan. In the first fight, I knocked him out in two rounds. In the second fight, I knocked him out in the 14th. In the second fight, Kanazawa was better. He really trained because it was a world title fight. He did everything he could in training to try to beat me. I also went into the second fight very well-trained.

BEST OVERALL SKILLS

Bobby Chacon: First of all, I was very saddened to hear about Bobby's passing. We became friends after it was all over. A great champion he was. Chacon was never in a bad fight. He was a brave fighter who moved like a ring general. Chacon hit hard but he also took a lot of punishment in the ring. He showed patience in the ring. He was a good boxer-puncher who stood in there and gave it all he had.

BEST OVERALL

Jesus Pimentel: There were three really tough ones: Pimentel, Bobby Chacon and Art Hafey. I would say Pimentel was the toughest. He had big cojones, he boxed and he put up with a lot of punishment. Bobby Chacon, too. I beat Chacon two out of three fights. Art Hafey – a great, great boxer. Tough. He threw a thundering right hand.

Anson can be reached at elraincoat@live.co.uk. You can follow him on Twitter @AnsonWainwright.

Seanie Monaghan might've lost more than a fight against Marcus Browne (right).

FIRST CUT IS DEEPEST

A FIGHTER'S INITIAL SETBACK CAN BE PAINFUL FOR HIM AND THOSE AROUND HIM

Boxing writers, like most fans, develop a fondness for certain fighters. What separates us from the average fan is that we sometimes also develop personal relationships with the fighters we're covering.

I was at Seanie Monaghan's pro debut on May 21, 2010. It was at Capitale in New York on the undercard of a dreadful mismatch between Shannon Briggs and Dominique Alexander. Seanie was fighting a guy named Simeon Trigueno, who would finish his ring career at 0-4. Promoter Joe DeGuardia was protecting Monaghan (as Bob Arum would later) because Seanie was a ticket-seller. Being a contrarian sort who's inclined to root for the underdog when I don't know either fighter, I was rooting for Trigueno. Seanie knocked him out in the first round.

Several years later, I spent three hours talking one-on-one with Seanie for an article I was writing. And I came away saying, "This is a great guy."

Every time Monaghan has fought since then, my heart has been in his gloves.

"You need a mean streak to be a fighter," Seanie once told me. "But it's not just fighters. There are rich people who've never thrown a punch in their life who are just as mean and cruel as any fighter. Sometimes they're worse. It just comes out in different ways. Outside the ring, I try to be as nice a person as I can be."

On July 15, Seanie suffered the first loss of his pro career when he was knocked out by Marcus Browne in the second round of a fight at Nassau Coliseum on Long Island. I saw it on television, and it hurt to watch.

Seanie suffered more physical damage in some of his victories than he did in the Browne fight. But the loss to Browne exacted an enormous price. Serious economic consequences will follow. There's also an emotional low that comes with losing.

Writing in "Intimate Warfare," Dennis Taylor and John Raspanti summed up the emotional turmoil that accompanies a fighter's first loss: "Gone is the fighter's own mindset of invincibility. Suddenly, he has a chink in his armor that wasn't there before. He is forced to relinquish the illusion that he is unbeatable, that he will always find a way to overcome and prevail. Now he knows better. He will always know better. A record that is blemished just once won't turn the fighter into a non-entity. But an unspoken probationary period descends like a threatening storm cloud. The ledge overlooking oblivion becomes a bit more precarious, feeling like it could crumble beneath the fighter's feet at any moment."

Monaghan can look back on what he has accomplished over the past seven years in boxing and in his personal life with pride. But the odds that he'll make life-changing money from boxing in the future just got longer.

★ ★ ★

Max Baer reigned as heavyweight champion for one day shy of a year during the seven-year interregnum between

PHOTO BY ED DILLER / DIBELLA ENTERTAINMENT

Gene Tunney and Joe Louis. John Jarrett tells his story in "Max Baer: Clown Prince of Boxing" (Pitch Publishing). The book isn't up to the standard that Jarrett set two years ago with "Dempsey and the Wild Bull." But it does have some entertaining moments.

Baer fashioned a 66-13 (51 knockouts) career ledger. He was a showman and a womanizer, kind-hearted and erratic, with a potent right hand. "I don't like to fight," he once said. "I never did, except when I'm hurt. Then I want to get in there and hurt back."

Baer's career was defined by four consecutive fights contested within the span of 27 months.

On June 8, 1933, he knocked out former heavyweight champion Max Schmeling in the 10th round of a brutal back-and-forth encounter. Talking with his vanquished opponent after the bout, Baer observed, "I was pretty rough in there. But say, a fight's a fight, isn't it?"

After beating Schmeling, Baer took advantage of his good looks and outgoing personality to land a starring role in the Hollywood film "The Prizefighter and The Lady." It was soon apparent that he preferred vaudeville, acting in motion pictures and womanizing to fighting. But on June 14, 1934, he returned to the ring to challenge Primo Carnera, who had knocked out Jack Sharkey to claim the heavyweight crown.

Baer had the good fortune to challenge the mob-controlled Carnera in an honest fight. Before the bout, the challenger promised, "That's one that will be so good, I wish I was out in the audience watching myself." In a sloppy, free-swinging affair, he knocked the Italian giant down an implausible 12 times en route to an 11th-round stoppage.

"Carnera didn't look bad," Joe Williams wrote afterward. "He looked terrible."

Baer looked just as terrible 364 days later when he made his first and only title defense, coming in undermotivated and out of shape to lose a decision to James Braddock in one of the worst heavyweight championship fights ever.

Interviewed after his defeat, Baer told Tommy Manning of NBC radio, "I'm glad and really happy to see Jimmy happy. He'll appreciate it more than I did. After all, he's got a family and he's married. Of course, I might have a family around the country too, but I don't know it."

Baer chose unwisely for his comeback fight after losing to Braddock. Three months later, on September 24, 1935, he stepped into the ring before an estimated 95,000 fans at Yankee Stadium to face an undefeated young heavyweight named Joe Louis.

Louis knocked him out in four rounds. Baer could have gotten up after his final trip to the canvas but didn't.

"Sure I quit," he acknowledged afterward. "He hit me 18 times while I was going down the last time. If anybody wants to see the execution of Max Baer, he's got to pay more than 25 bucks for a ringside seat."

Baer died of a heart attack in 1959 at age 50.

Damon Runyon summed him up nicely when he wrote, "There have been many greater fighters than Max Baer, but never a greater showman."

★★★

Seth Abraham was reminiscing recently about an incident that occurred in the 1980s when he was president of HBO Sports and working to build the network's boxing program.

Abraham met in his office at HBO with professional wrestling entrepreneur Vince McMahon as a courtesy to Caesars, which was hosting World Wrestling Federation events as well as big fights at that time. McMahon wanted HBO to televise pro wrestling and made his pitch. Abraham turned him down.

"I told Vince it would damage our boxing brand," Abraham recalled. "I explained that boxing already had trouble maintaining its credibility and that pairing it on HBO with a scripted sport that had prearranged outcomes wouldn't work. Then things got ugly. Vince became abusive. I asked him to leave. He wouldn't. And I threatened to call security, which finally prompted him to go."

Fast-forward to 2003. Abraham, who had left HBO to become president of Madison Square Garden, was asked by MSG officials to approve McMahon's induction into the Madison Square Garden Walk of Fame.

McMahon's credentials for induction were substantial. The WWF, known by then as World Wrestling Entertainment, had promoted events at the Garden every year since 1985. McMahon's own father had been inducted into what was previously known as the Madison Square Garden Hall of Fame.

When asked about inducting the junior McMahon, Abraham replied, "Absolutely."

"I called Vince and invited him to my office at the Garden," Abraham told this writer. "Vince came, not knowing what to expect. His jaw dropped when I gave him the news. Then he got teary. He mentioned my throwing him out of my office years before and said he couldn't believe I was part of giving him this honor. And I told him, "Vince, it ain't the HBO Hall of Fame." RING

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book – "There Will Always Be Boxing" – will be published this fall by the University of Arkansas Press. In 2004, the Boxing Writers Association of America honored Hauser with the Nat Fleischer Award for career excellence in boxing journalism.

Bernard Hopkins needed some assistance from the referee after Roy Jones Jr. landed a low blow in their second fight.

TERTIUS PICKARD/AP

REFS SHOULD BE INVISIBLE

THE THIRD MAN IN THE RING SHOULD INTERRUPT THE ACTION ONLY WHEN ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY

This is one in a series of columns by future Hall of Famer Bernard Hopkins, who gives us his thoughts on various subjects important to every boxer and fan. This issue: officiating.

If my opponent fouled me, I was ready to return the favor. I never complained to the referee or looked for help. I simply took matters into my own hands. It played out the same way on the basketball court in Philadelphia. If a kid punched me, was I going to go cry to Momma? Hell no. That would have just resulted in a second whooping.

I took that mentality into the ring with me.

If the referee wasn't paying attention, then I knew something: I can do what I need to win this fight by any means necessary. Now, that doesn't mean I was trying to be dirty in there. But if I'm worried about what the referee is doing, then I can't worry about fighting the man in front of me. I'm in with this guy who's trying to knock my head off. If the ref is sleeping, then that's on him.

Larry Hazzard once told me: The best referees aren't seen. They don't try to become a star during the fight, don't block the camera and never get in the way. If the referee is good, you don't even realize he's in the damn ring.

Protect yourself at all times. What do you mean? You're there in the ring with me. The referee gives us the rules in the dressing room and then he says it again. Protect yourself at all times. Wow. When I figured that out as a young pro, everything changed. It means that we're in there by ourselves, and whatever he sees, he sees. And whatever he don't, he don't.

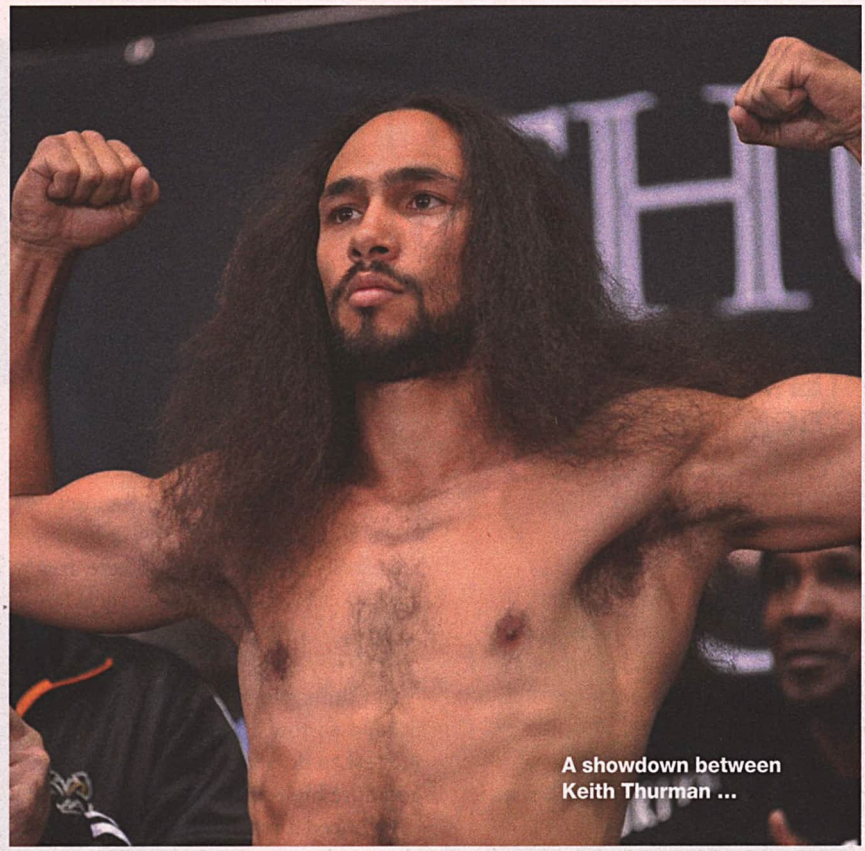
Most referees perform a good, honest job. This much I admit. I estimate that 70 to 80 percent of referees in boxing are credible professionals. There aren't a lot of referees out there in their late 20s or early 30s. Most are 45 and older. They have a lot of experience. And I think the majority of referees are nonbiased toward fighters. It's in their interest to do a good job so they can get more high-profile fights.

You need a ref that can take charge, that won't take any BS from anybody, though. Some fighters have a reputation of skirting the rules – like me – but at the end of the day, I learned how to use a referee as a plus, not a negative. If I feel he's on me more than the other guy – telling me to clean it up, interfering with the fight itself – yeah, that can become agitating. I tried to use it as positive energy to beat up the other guy as bad as possible.

What frustrates me is when the referee tells you what you can and cannot do on the inside. That was my bread and butter. When he wants to break every time you get close to a clinch, that's a problem. I've seen referees where there's a clinch for two seconds and they call for a break. Some guys need to be in close to be effective. If the fighters aren't rabbit punching or pulling on the neck, let them fight.

I think the best referees are the ones who know how to not only control the match but also understand that these are fighters and let them work their fight style the way they work it – unless there's a foul.

You can only hope for one thing at the end of the day: that the referee is barely noticed. RING



A showdown between Keith Thurman ...

KEITH THURMAN VS. ERROL SPENCE JR.

... and Errol Spence would be well-received.

THREE EXPERTS – A FIGHTER, A TRAINER AND A MEDIA MEMBER – TELL YOU HOW A POTENTIAL MATCHUP WOULD PLAY OUT

The welterweight division has dazzled for decades.

The 1980s featured Sugar Ray Leonard, Thomas Hearns and Roberto Duran. The '90s starred Pernell Whitaker, Oscar De La Hoya and Felix Trinidad. In this millennium, Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao established themselves as the two biggest superstars in world boxing.

And the future doesn't look too bad either.

Unbeaten Americans Keith Thurman and Errol Spence Jr. are rated Nos. 1 and 2 by THE RING at welterweight, respectively. Both are dynamic boxer-punchers with pound-for-pound potential, looking to build legacies comparable to their predecessors. They have combined to stop 41 of their 50 victims.

Thurman, the WBA and WBC titleholder, is coming off two decision victories over top competition. In June of last year, "One Time" gutted it out against Shawn Porter in a classic give-and-take brawl and, nine months later, he outfoxed Danny Garcia to unify two world title belts.

Spence has only faced one real test but passed with flying colors. In May, the sharpshooting southpaw ventured to Sheffield, England, to relieve Kell Brook of the IBF title in front of 27,000 hostile fans. "The Truth" boxed superbly, punishing the more experienced titleholder on his way to a brutal 11th-round knockout.

Thurman vs. Spence, anyone? Three experts offer their opinion on what would happen if this can't-miss all-American welterweight showdown became a reality.

TWITTER POLL: WHO WINS? SPENCE 68% ★ THURMAN 32% ★ DRAW 0%

THURMAN ★ TALE OF THE TAPE ★ SPENCE

147 POUNDS

THURMAN		SPENCE
28	AGE	27
(28-0, 22 KOS)	RECORD	(22-0, 19 KOS)
79	KO PERCENTAGE	86
ORTHODOX	STANCE	SOUTHPAW
5 FEET 7½ INCHES (171 CM)	HEIGHT	5 FEET 9½ INCHES (177 CM)
69 INCHES (175 CM)	REACH	72 INCHES (183 CM)

FIGHTER

JEFF HORN

WBO welterweight titleholder

Thurman is a good fighter. Like myself, he's a bit unorthodox in the way that he fights but he's definitely up there as one of the best in the world. He's got two world titles, he's proved himself and he's beaten some good guys. Three of us have title belts in the division right now and with Thurman having two, he would be the number one target for me in a unification fight. If that became an option after my rematch with Manny Pacquiao, then I'd fight him for sure. Spence did very well against Kell Brook; he threw some nice, sharp, fast punches, although I did think Brook won the first half of that fight. Errol just came back, broke him down and ended up winning impressively. He's a very competent fighter. I actually thought that Brook would be able to outmuscle Spence because he's so big for the weight, but it was the other way around and that was a surprise. A fight between Thurman and Spence is as close to 50-50 as it gets. It's really difficult for me to pick but I'd probably just lean towards Spence because of the power aspect. However, Keith Thurman is probably a better mover and if he used that elegance to his advantage, then he could win.

PREDICTION: SPENCE

TRAINER

ROBERT GARCIA

Trainer

I think this would be a great fight for the welterweight division. Keith Thurman beat Shawn Porter and Danny Garcia and those guys are top-level fighters, but I lean toward Spence. I was very impressed with the way Spence handled Kell Brook and I expected that fight to be a lot closer. He dominated Brook and I don't even think that was his best performance. In the early rounds, Spence was a little too cautious; he probably wasn't comfortable in Brook's hometown and everything was against him that night. But once he started picking his punches, Spence broke Kell Brook down and set him up for the stoppage in the later rounds. That experience will make him a much better fighter. Now that he's a world champion, he has the confidence and the skills to make things easier for himself. Spence has been to England, beat a very good fighter in his hometown, but I think you'll see the best of him in the United States when he's relaxed. I think a fight against Thurman would go the distance but I wouldn't be surprised if Spence lands a punch and hurts Thurman badly. Thurman is one of the best welterweights in the world but when it comes to skills, I just think Errol Spence is a much better fighter.

PREDICTION: SPENCE

MEDIA

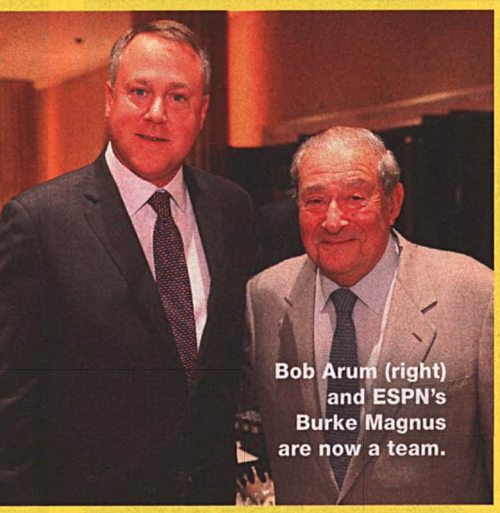
MICHAEL ROSENTHAL

THE RING Magazine Editor

Some people would pick Thurman in this fight because he's a more proven commodity, but Spence is better in every other category. Thurman deserves credit for beating guys like Shawn Porter and Danny Garcia, but both those fights were very close and Thurman didn't look special in either one. Something was missing. Maybe he was holding back, as if he doesn't want to make mistakes. Maybe he's not quite as good as we think he is. He seems vulnerable to me. I believe Spence is the quicker, better boxer and has more punching power. And it seems to me he has unwavering confidence in himself and laser focus. I saw that in his fight against Kell Brook. Spence outboxed and broke down a very good boxer and then finished the job. None of Thurman's victories has been as impressive as that. I would give Thurman a chance of winning. I almost expect him to blossom into a star overnight. I just think that Spence has that star quality already, even if he hasn't yet demonstrated it against more than one elite opponent. I think Spence-Thurman would look a lot like Spence-Brook, with Spence picking Thurman apart and breaking him down. I will predict a unanimous decision here but I wouldn't rule out a knockout. This fight would be Spence's true coming-out party.

PREDICTION: SPENCE

BACK TO THE PEOPLE


Bob Arum (right) and ESPN's Burke Magnus are now a team.

There's one crucial ingredient for a sport to be popular: the populace. Likewise, it can't be "the people's sport" if the people can't see it.

Old-timers – or just anyone who knows that boxing existed before **Jim Lampley** – will rightly point at the sport's shift from free network TV to subscriber-only cable and pay-per-view as one of the major reasons why it receded from cultural centerpiece to niche status. And with tiresome regularity, a promoter or TV producer will emerge with a plan to bring boxing "back to the people." It never quite works.

In late August, however, promoter **Top Rank** and network **ESPN** officially announced a deal which, at the very least, has high potential. Spelled out in a 75-page contract, it creates an exclusive bond between the two companies for a minimum of four years, meaning Top Rank fighters will no longer be headlining on **HBO** or **Showtime**.

A major difference from previous attempts to "fix" boxing, including the lavishly funded **Premier Boxing Champions** venture, is that ESPN will put intense focus on platforms aimed at cord-cutters not willing to fund "Game of Thrones" with high membership fees. And that means reaching audiences that could not just rival, but surpass the heydays of the 20th century.

HBO has roughly 50 million subscribers in the U.S. and Showtime's base is significantly less. ESPN, meanwhile, averaged 85.8 million unique viewers per month across its digital platforms alone in 2016, according to its own statistics. The Walt Disney Co., which owns ESPN, has recently expanded that platform with the acquisition of worldwide streaming service BAMTech.

A telling aspect of the deal is that it was supervised and will be managed in part by Creative Artists Agency, a high-powered talent broker usually associated with stars of screen and stage. Accordingly, ESPN and Top Rank will roll out cards featuring names like **Manny Pacquiao, Terence Crawford** and **Vasyl Lomachenko** on a regular basis. Not that young prospects in Top Rank founder **Bob Arum's** stable won't be available also. They will, to a frightening degree with blanket coverage of undercards and who-knows-what in the way of original programming. The deal also includes Top Rank's extensive archive.

All this means a much greater share of the market for ESPN on top of a multi-fight deal with Golden Boy Promotions already in place.

There will be a lot of time slots to fill, a junkie's paradise of boxing to consume – "365 days a year," according to Burke Magnus, ESPN executive vice president of programming and scheduling. It could be the sort of blast to the past many have yearned for.

Angelique Duchemin, a rising star in women's boxing, died in late August after apparently suffering a heart attack during training in her home country of France. Duchemin was undefeated in 14 pro fights and had already won the European championship at junior lightweight and the WBF title at featherweight. She was only 26.

Terence Crawford vacated his IBF 140-pound title on August 31, with his other four belts likely to follow suit as he moves to welterweight. A week earlier, a judge in Nebraska threw out a 90-day jail sentence imposed on Crawford for a strange incident in which he tried to repossess his own car from a body shop.

There were a lot of strange incidents linked to the **Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Conor McGregor** fight. In one instance, Justin Bieber shockingly unfollowed Mayweather on Instagram, saying the fighter's lifestyle was no longer Christian enough. In another, the WBC rolled out The Money Belt, a jewel-encrusted publicity stunt valued at a reported $400,000. The sanctioning body's signature green strap, presumably donated by cows for fighters earning less than nine figures, was replaced by alligator skin, which drew a public protest from PETA. Also, a rumor circulated that a promoter named **Barry Gibson** was murdered for revealing that the fight was fixed. Who was Barry Gibson? Nobody knew. Fake news. The part about the murder, at least.

Then, as the opening bell approached, a panic set in: Multiple streaming platforms went down due to overwhelming demand. But the delay didn't last long, the streams were mended and everything proceeded in a professional manner. The part about the streams, at least.

A new book by former Sun reporter **Michael Litchfield** purports to solve several real murders, including one the victim asked for. According to Litchfield, popular British light heavyweight **Freddie Mills** – who briefly held the light heavyweight title after beating **Gus Lesnevich** in 1948, retired in 1950 and was found dead in an alley from an apparent suicide in '65 – admitted to being a serial killer known as "Jack the Stripper." The confession was allegedly recorded by a police commissioner who granted Mills a fews days to turn himself in. Rather than honor the bargain, however, Mills approached twin gangsters Ronnie and Reggie Kray – old friends of his – and through them hired a man to kill him and make it look like a suicide. The only requirement, claims Litchfield, was that Mills didn't want to see it coming.

TOP RANK

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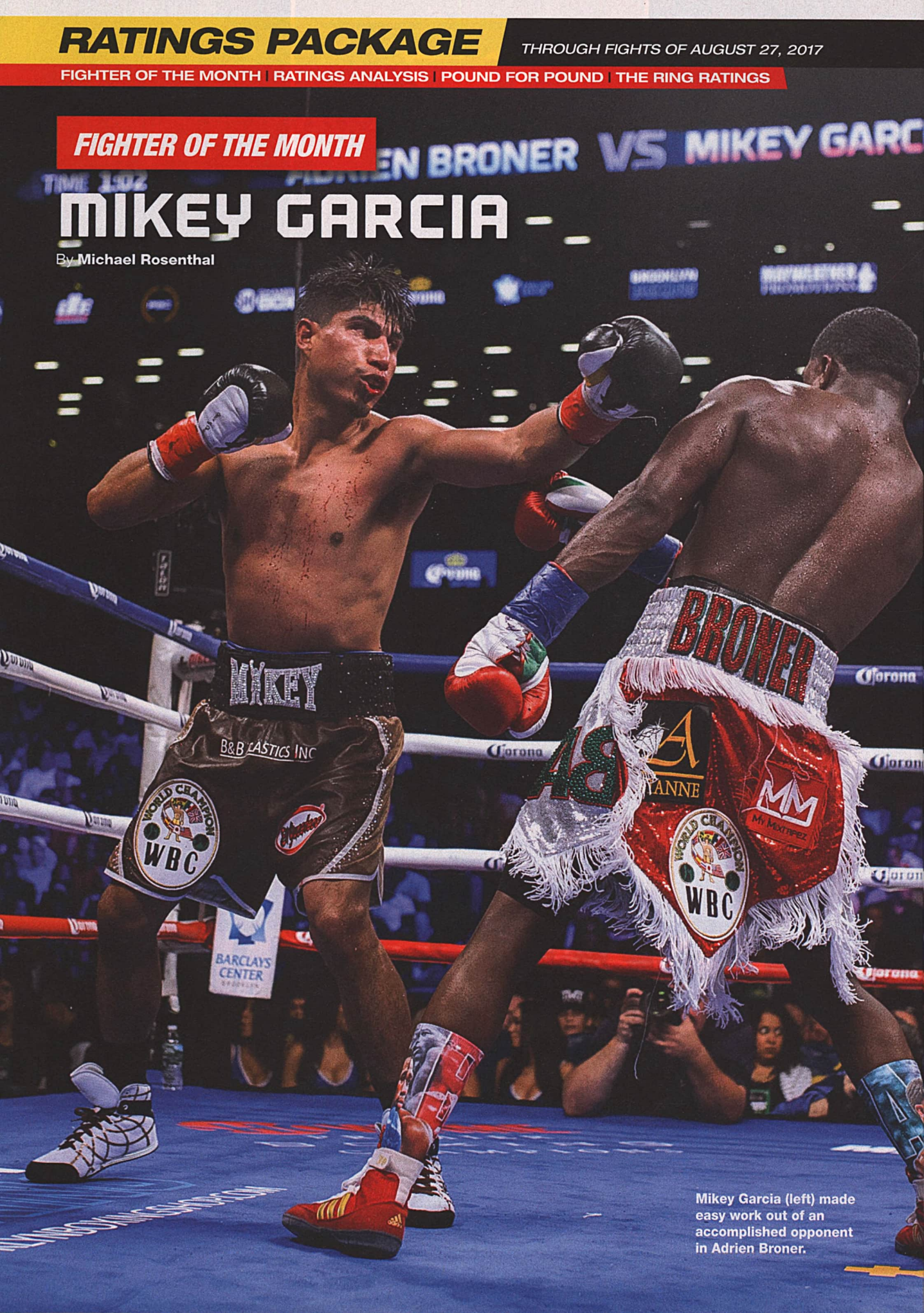
Pictured left to right: Damon Allen Jr., Jessie Vargas, Fernando Vargas

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

MIKEY GARCIA

By Michael Rosenthal



Mikey Garcia (left) made easy work out of an accomplished opponent in Adrien Broner.

Another fight, another step toward major stardom. Mikey Garcia is building tremendous momentum.

A fit, determined and naturally bigger Adrien Broner was supposed to be a significant test for the lightweight titleholder on July 29 in Brooklyn. In the end, Garcia turned the former four-division beltholder into just another overmatched victim.

Garcia dominated Broner from the opening bell with his tight, perfectly timed punches and measured, but constant pressure. The loser wasn't able to get off his own shots consistently because Garcia never gave him a chance.

Garcia wasn't able to hurt Broner, which might indicate that he didn't carry his full punching power up to 140 pounds. However, that might be attributed to Broner's durability and the fact he wasn't willing to open up and exchange punches.

In a way, Broner did what was necessary to survive. That's remarkable given his past success and it says a lot about Garcia.

The official scores were 117-111, 116-112 and 116-112, the latter two of which might have given Broner too much credit. The first score – nine rounds to three – reflected what happened in the ring.

Overall, Garcia (37-0, 30 knockouts) couldn't have done much better. It was a performance that bolstered his reputation as one of the most complete fighters in the world and places him firmly in the pound-for-pound mix.

He could be on a collision course with Vasyl Lomachenko, Terence Crawford or Jorge Linares. Whomever he fights next had better be at their best if they hope to win.

POUND FOR POUND: Mikey Garcia (unrated last month) seems to unpack more talent with each one of his post-layoff performances, and this time a unanimous decision over Adrien Broner (unrated) was enough to land him a spot at No. 9. That pushed No. 10 Naoya Inoue off the list. Inoue later returned and replaced countryman Shinsuke Yamanaka at No. 10 after Yamanaka lost a four-round shocker to Luis Nery (unrated). Terence Crawford (No. 4 last month) then torched Julius Indongo (unrated) in three rounds and switched places with No. 3 Roman Gonzalez.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: A sea-change, the end of an era, the inevitable … call it what you will: Wladimir Klitschko (No. 3 last month) retired after a staggering 638 weeks on our list. His departure created a vacancy at No. 10 for Jarrell Miller.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No change.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Oleksandr Gvozdyk (No. 5 last month) rose a notch after stopping unrated Craig Baker in six rounds. Badou Jack then made an emphatic entrance at No. 8 after retiring Nathan Cleverly (No. 7 last month) with a fifth-round TKO.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Jermall Charlo (unrated last month) debuted at 160 with a fourth-round stoppage of Jorge Heiland (also unrated), but an early injury to Heiland's knee kept it from being a completely satisfying win and Charlo just cracked the list at No. 10. Sergiy Derevyanchenko stopped unrated Tureano Johnson in the 12th round and climbed from No. 9 to No. 6.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Garcia's victory over Broner (unrated) was only his second fight at 140 pounds and he still holds a title at 135, so entering the list at No. 3 made him the first fighter since Canelo Alvarez to occupy two classes simultaneously. Topping that achievement was division champion Crawford, who briefly held all five belts – including the RING championship – simultaneously after exceeding already-high expectations with his win over Indongo. Indongo lost two straps and fell from No. 2 to No. 6.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Garcia's lightweight title – and his still-intact ability to make 135 pounds – kept his options open, so he held his position at No. 1. Raymundo Beltran (No. 8 last month) might've kept a lot more than that: His majority-decision win over Bryan Vasquez (unrated) was portrayed as a high-stakes contest to protect both his career and immigration status. He rose to No. 5.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: A pair of Takashis – Takashi Uchiyama (No. 6) and Takashi Miura (No. 10) – announced their retirements and exited the list, leaving two empty spaces at the bottom. They were taken by a pair of 35-year-olds: Edner Cherry at No. 9 and Robinson Castellanos at No. 10.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Simpiwe Vetyeka (No. 7 last month) was removed for inactivity and Scott Quigg returned at No. 10.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: No change.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Rau'shee Warren (No. 5 last month) dropped down to 115 and the resulting shift made room for undefeated Colombian Oscar Negrete at No. 10. Nery (No. 6 last month) stunned then-champion Yamanaka with a fourth-round knockout and looked every bit the top dog he became with the win (Yamanaka dropped to No. 5). The Mexican tested positive for a banned substance, however, so the permanence of his status was on shaky ground as this issue went to press.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: Warren entered at No. 8 after a wide unanimous-decision win over No. 9-rated McJoe Arroyo, who dropped off the list.

FLYWEIGHTS: Chinese boxing pioneer Zou Shiming (No. 5 last month) lost his title and dropped out of the ratings after getting knocked out by Sho Kimura, who entered the list at No. 10.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No change.

STRAWWEIGHTS: Ryuya Yamanaka climbed from No. 8 to No. 7 after taking a title from Tatsuya Fukuhara in a close fight. Fukuhara held his position at No. 9.

Badou Jack (right) sent Nathan Cleverly into retirement with a fifth-round knockout.

THE FIGURES UNDER THE FIGHTERS' NAMES INDICATE: WEEKS IN THE RATINGS • COUNTRY • RECORD

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C TYSON FURY
289 • U.K. • 25-0-0 (18 KOs)

1. **ANTHONY JOSHUA**
96 • U.K. • 19-0-0 (19 KOs)
2. **DEONTAY WILDER**
197 • U.S. • 38-0-0 (37 KOs)
3. **KUBRAT PULEV**
307 • Bulgaria • 25-1-0 (13 KOs)
4. **LUIS ORTIZ**
89 • Cuba • 27-0-0 (23 KOs)
5. **JOSEPH PARKER**
73 • New Zealand • 23-0-0 (18 KOs)
6. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
9 • Russia • 32-1-0 (23 KOs)
7. **ANDY RUIZ JR.**
65 • Mexico • 29-1-0 (19 KOs)
8. **DILLIAN WHYTE**
37 • U.K. • 21-1-0 (16 KOs)
9. **DOMINIC BREAZEALE**
27 • U.S. • 18-1-0 (16 KOs)
10. **JARRELL MILLER**
4 • U.S. • 19-0-1 (17 KOS)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **OLEKSANDR USYK**
100 • Ukraine • 12-0-0 (10 KOs)
2. **MURAT GASSIEV**
42 • Russia • 24-0-0 (17 KOs)
3. **TONY BELLEW**
67 • U.K. • 29-2-1 (19 KOs)
4. **MAIRIS BRIEDIS**
79 • Latvia • 22-0-0 (18 KOs)
5. **DENIS LEBEDEV**
396 • Russia • 30-2-0 (22 KOs)
6. **KRZYSZTOF GLOWACKI**
107 • Poland • 27-1-0 (17 KOs)
7. **MARCO HUCK**
286 • Germany • 40-4-1 (27 KOs)
8. **FIRAT ARSLAN**
252 • Germany • 40-8-2 (25 KOs)
9. **ILUNGA MAKABU**
216 • Congo • 21-2-0 (20 KOs)
10. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
15 • Poland • 53-3-1 (37 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C ANDRE WARD
75 • U.S. • 32-0-0 (16 KOs)

1. **ADONIS STEVENSON**
221 • Canada • 29-1-0 (24 KOs)
2. **SERGEY KOVALEV**
241 • Russia • 30-2-1 (26 KOs)
3. **ELEIDER ALVAREZ**
181 • Colombia • 23-0-0 (11 KOs)
4. **OLEKSANDR GVOZDYK**
41 • Ukraine • 14-0-0 (12 KOs)
5. **ARTUR BETERBIEV**
142 • Russia • 11-0-0 (11 KOs)
6. **SULLIVAN BARRERA**
37 • Cuba • 20-1-0 (14 KOs)
7. **DMITRY BIVOL**
11 • Russia • 11-0-0 (9 KOs)
8. **BADOU JACK**
1 • Sweden • 22-1-2 (13 KOs)
9. **MARCUS BROWNE**
28 • U.S. • 20-0-0 (15 KOs)
10. **JOE SMITH JR.**
63 • U.S. • 23-2-0 (19 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **JAMES DEGALE**
221 • U.K. • 23-1-1 (14 KOs)
2. **GILBERTO RAMIREZ**
164 • Mexico • 35-0-0 (24 KOs)
3. **GEORGE GROVES**
299 • U.K. • 26-3-0 (19 KOs)
4. **ANDRE DIRRELL**
157 • U.S. • 26-2-0 (16 KOs)
5. **CALLUM SMITH**
117 • U.K. • 22-0-0 (17 KOs)
6. **ANTHONY DIRRELL**
159 • U.S. • 30-1-1 (24 KOs)
7. **CHRIS EUBANK JR.**
7 • U.K. • 25-1-0 (19 KOs)
8. **TYRON ZEUGE**
42 • Germany • 21-0-1 (11 KOs)
9. **DAVID BENAVIDEZ**
15 • U.S. • 18-0-0 (17 KOs)
10. **JESSE HART**
14 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (18 KOs)

Rex Features via AP Images

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C CANELO ALVAREZ
93 • Mexico • 49-1-1 (34 KOs)

1. GENNADY GOLOVKIN
299 • Kaz. • 37-0-0 (33 KOs)

2. DANIEL JACOBS
142 • U.S. • 32-2-0 (29 KOs)

3. DAVID LEMIEUX
118 • Canada • 38-3-0 (33 KOs)

4. BILLY JOE SAUNDERS
144 • U.K. • 24-0-0 (12 KOs)

5. AVTANDIL KHURTSIDZE
78 • Georgia • 33-2-2 (22 KOs)

6. SERGIY DEREVYANCHENKO
21 • Ukraine • 11-0-0 (9 KOs)

7. ANDY LEE
142 • Ireland • 35-3-1 (24 KOs)

8. HASSAN N'DAM
189 • Cameroon • 36-2-0 (21 KOs)

9. RYOTA MURATA
35 • Japan • 12-1-0 (9 KOs)

10. JERMALL CHARLO
5 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (20 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. ERISLANDY LARA
322 • Cuba • 24-2-2 (14 KOs)

2. JERMELL CHARLO
199 • U.S. • 29-0-0 (14 KOs)

3. MIGUEL COTTO
93 • P.R. • 41-5-0 (33 KOs)

4. DEMETRIUS ANDRADE
98 • U.S. • 24-0-0 (16 KOs)

5. AUSTIN TROUT
273 • U.S. • 30-3-0 (17 KOs)

6. JARRETT HURD
42 • U.S. • 20-0-0 (14 KOs)

7. LIAM SMITH
103 • U.K. • 25-1-1 (14 KOs)

8. ERICKSON LUBIN
26 • U.S. • 18-0-0 (13 KOs)

9. BRIAN CASTANO
9 • Argentina • 14-0-0 (10 KOs)

10. MICHEL SORO
37 • France • 30-2-1 (20 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. KEITH THURMAN
234 • U.S. • 28-0-0 (22 KOs)

2. ERROL SPENCE
100 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (19 KOs)

3. SHAWN PORTER
195 • U.S. • 27-2-1 (17 KOs)

4. KELL BROOK
332 • U.K. • 36-2-0 (25 KOs)

5. DANNY GARCIA
109 • U.S. • 33-1-0 (19 KOs)

6. LAMONT PETERSON
28 • U.S. • 35-3-1 (17 KOs)

7. LUCAS MATTHYSSE
13 • Argentina • 38-4-0 (35 KOs)

8. JEFF HORN
9 • Australia • 17-0-1 (11 KOs)

9. MANNY PACQUIAO
43 • Phil. • 59-7-2 (38 KOs)

10. JESSIE VARGAS
78 • U.S. • 27-2-0 (10 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C TERENCE CRAWFORD
124 • U.S. • 32-0-0 (23 KOs)

1. VIKTOR POSTOL
211 • Ukraine • 28-1-0 (12 KOs)

2. MIKEY GARCIA
5 • U.S. • 37-0-0 (30 KOs)

3. ANTONIO OROZCO
100 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (17 KOs)

4. REGIS PROGRAIS
58 • U.S. • 20-0-0 (17 KOs)

5. ADRIAN GRANADOS
78 • U.S. • 18-5-2 (12 KOs)

6. JULIUS INDONGO
39 • Namibia • 22-1-0 (11 KOs)

7. EDUARD TROYANOVSKY
92 • Russia • 26-1-0 (23 KOs)

8. SERGEY LIPINETS
38 • Russia • 12-0-0 (10 KOs)

9. RANCES BARTHELEMY
15 • Cuba • 26-0-0 (13 KOs)

10. JOSH TAYLOR
8 • U.K. • 10-0-0 (9 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C JORGE LINARES
182 • Venezuela • 42-3-0 (27 KOs)

1. MIKEY GARCIA
31 • U.S. • 37-0-0 (30 KOs)

2. TERRY FLANAGAN
99 • U.K. • 33-0-0 (13 KOs)

3. ROBERT EASTER
74 • U.S. • 20-0-0 (14 KOs)

4. DENIS SHAFIKOV
125 • Russia • 38-3-1 (20 KOs)

5. RAYMUNDO BELTRAN
21 • Mexico • 34-7-1 (21 KOs)

6. SHARIF BOGERE
148 • Uganda • 29-1-0 (20 KOs)

7. RICHARD COMMEY
118 • Ghana • 25-2-0 (22 KOs)

8. FELIX VERDEJO
72 • Puerto Rico • 23-0-0 (15 KOs)

9. ANTHONY CROLLA
97 • U.K. • 31-6-3 (13 KOs)

10. DEJAN ZLATICANIN
125 • Montenegro • 22-1-0 (15 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. VASYL LOMACHENKO
64 • Ukraine • 9-1-0 (7 KOs)

2. MIGUEL BERCHELT
31 • Mexico • 32-1-0 (28 KOs)

3. JEZREEL CORRALES
70 • Panama • 22-1-0 (8 KOs)

4. ORLANDO SALIDO
154 • Mexico • 44-13-4 (31 KOs)

5. GERVONTA DAVIS
33 • U.S. • 19-0-0 (18 KOs)

6. FRANCISCO VARGAS
164 • Mexico • 23-1-2 (17 KOs)

7. TEVIN FARMER
21 • U.S. • 25-4-1 (5 KOs)

8. JHONNY GONZALEZ
6 • Mexico • 64-10-0 (54 KOs)

9. EDNER CHERRY
5 • U.S. • 36-7-2 (19 KOs)

10. ROBINSON CASTELLANOS
5 • Mexico • 24-13-0 (14 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. LEO SANTA CRUZ
105 • U.S. • 33-1-1 (18 KOs)

2. GARY RUSSELL JR.
127 • U.S. • 28-1-0 (17 KOs)

3. CARL FRAMPTON
57 • U.K. • 23-1-0 (14 KOs)

4. LEE SELBY
181 • U.K. • 25-1-0 (9 KOs)

5. ABNER MARES
226 • Mexico • 30-2-1 (15 KOs)

6. OSCAR VALDEZ
73 • Mexico • 22-0-0 (19 KOs)

7. JOSEPH DIAZ JR.
75 • U.S. • 24-0-0 (13 KOs)

8. JESUS CUELLAR
152 • Argentina • 28-2-0 (21 KOs)

9. JORGE LARA
48 • Mexico • 29-0-2 (21 KOs)

10. SCOTT QUIGG
1 • U.K. • 33-1-2 (24 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
356 • Cuba • 17-0-0 (11 KOs)

2. JESSIE MAGDALENO
116 • U.S. • 25-0-0 (18 KOs)

3. REY VARGAS
142 • Mexico • 30-0-0 (22 KOs)

4. NONITO DONAIRE
127 • Phil. • 37-4-0 (24 KOs)

5. MOISES FLORES
60 • Mexico • 25-0-0 (17 KOs)

6. DIEGO DE LA HOYA
57 • Mexico • 19-0-0 (9 KOs)

7. HUGO RUIZ
38 • Mexico • 36-4-0 (32 KOs)

8. YUKINORI OGUNI
35 • Japan • 19-1-1 (7 KOs)

9. SHUN KUBO
21 • Japan • 12-0-0 (9 KOs)

10. JULIO CEJA
14 • Mexico • 31-2-0 (28 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another. 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders choose not to fight one another and No. 1 fights No. 3, that matchup could be for the RING title if the Editorial Board deems No. 3 worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months, although injuries and certain other unforeseen circumstances could be taken into consideration; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his championship weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Editorial Board considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world and then decides collectively what changes will be made. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

Records provided by boxrec.com

RING RATINGS

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C LUIS NERY
57 • Mexico • 24-0-0 (18 KOs)

1. JAMIE MCDONNELL
226 • U.K. • 29-2-1 (13 KOs)

2. JUAN CARLOS PAYANO
153 • Dom. Rep. • 19-1-0 (9 KOs)

3. ZHANAT ZHAKIYANOV
29 • Kaz. • 27-1-0 (18 KOs)

4. ZOLANI TETE
77 • S. Africa • 25-3-0 (20 KOs)

5. SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
304 • Japan • 27-1-2 (19 KOs)

6. RYAN BURNETT
12 • U.K. • 17-0-0 (9 KOs)

7. LIBORIO SOLIS
25 • Venezuela • 25-5-1 (11 KOs)

8. LEE HASKINS
116 • U.K. • 34-4-0 (14 KOs)

9. EMMANUEL RODRIGUEZ
19 • P.R. • 17-0-0 (12 KOs)

10. OSCAR NEGRETE
5 • Colombia • 17-0-0 (7 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. NAOYA INOUE
139 • Japan • 13-0-0 (11 KOs)

2. WISAKSIL WANGEK
226 • Thailand • 43-4-1 (39 KOs)

3. ROMAN GONZALEZ
51 • Nicaragua • 46-1-0 (38 KOs)

4. CARLOS CUADRAS
275 • Mexico • 36-1-1 (27 KOs)

5. JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA
47 • Mexico • 35-2-0 (25 KOs)

6. KHALID YAFAI
77 • U.K. • 22-0-0 (14 KOs)

7. JERWIN ANCAJAS
53 • Phil. • 27-1-1 (18 KOs)

8. RAU'SHEE WARREN
5 • U.S. • 15-2-0 (4 KOs)

9. LUIS CONCEPCION
102 • Panama • 36-5-0 (25 KOs)

10. KOHEI KONO
98 • Japan • 33-10-1 (14 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. KAZUTO IOKA
155 • Japan • 22-1-0 (13 KOs)

2. DONNIE NIETES
49 • Phil. • 40-1-4 (22 KOs)

3. DAIGO HIGA
48 • Japan • 13-0-0 (13 KOs)

4. JUAN CARLOS REVECO
309 • Argentina • 38-3-0 (19 KOs)

5. VINCENT LEGRAND
29 • France • 24-0-0 (14 KOs)

6. MORUTI MTHALANE
18 • S. Africa • 33-2-0 (22 KOs)

7. ANDREW SELBY
13 • U.K. • 9-0-0 (5 KOs)

8. FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ JR.
11 • Mexico • 24-4-1 (16 KOs)

9. MASAYUKI KURODA
6 • Japan • 27-7-3 (15 KOs)

10. SHO KIMURA
5 • Japan • 15-1-2 (8 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. PEDRO GUEVARA
231 • Mexico • 30-2-1 (17 KOs)

2. KOSEI TANAKA
35 • Japan • 9-0-0 (5 KOs)

3. RYOICHI TAGUCHI
142 • Japan • 26-2-2 (12 KOs)

4. MILAN MELINDO
146 • Phil. • 36-2-0 (13 KOs)

5. CARLOS CANIZALES
34 • Venezuela • 18-0-1 (15 KOs)

6. KEN SHIRO
40 • Japan • 10-0-0 (5 KOs)

7. GANIGAN LOPEZ
78 • Mexico • 28-7-0 (17 KOs)

8. RANDY PETALCORIN
173 • Phil. • 26-2-1 (19 KOs)

9. HEKKIE BUDLER
45 • S. Africa • 31-2-0 (10 KOs)

10. AKIRA YAEGASHI
87 • Japan • 25-6-0 (13 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. CHAYAPHON MOONSRI
324 • Thailand • 48-0-0 (17 KOs)

2. THAMMANOON NIYOMTRONG
152 • Thailand • 16-0-0 (7 KOs)

3. BYRON ROJAS
76 • Nicaragua • 21-3-3 (9 KOs)

4. HIROTO KYOGUCHI
20 • Japan • 8-0-0 (6 KOs)

5. JOSE ARGUMEDO
87 • Mexico • 20-4-1 (12 KOs)

6. CARLOS BUITRAGO
255 • Nicaragua • 30-2-1 (17 KOs)

7. RYUYA YAMANAKA
42 • Japan • 15-2-0 (4 KOs)

8. SIMPHIWE KHONCO
45 • S. Africa • 18-5-0 (7 KOs)

9. TATSUYA FUKUHARA
17 • Japan • 19-5-6 (7 KOs)

10. LEROY ESTRADA
14 • Panama • 16-2-0 (6 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. ANDRE WARD
103 • U.S. • 32-0-0 (16 KOs)

2. GENNADY GOLOVKIN
133 • Kazakhstan • 37-0-0 (33 KOs)

3. TERENCE CRAWFORD
122 • U.S. • 32-0-0 (23 KOs)

4. ROMAN GONZALEZ
169 • Nicaragua • 46-1-0 (38 KOs)

5. VASYL LOMACHENKO
63 • Ukraine • 9-1-0 (7 KOs)

6. GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
210 • Cuba • 17-0-0 (11 KOs)

7. SERGEY KOVALEV
129 • Russia • 30-2-1 (26 KOs)

8. CANELO ALVAREZ
93 • Mexico • 49-1-1 (34 KOs)

9. MIKEY GARCIA
5 • U.S. • 37-0-0 (30 KOs)

10. NAOYA INOUE
2 • Japan • 13-0-0 (11 KOs)

THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a performance-enhancing drug or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested, then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings.

A boxer who is removed because of a positive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the test result was invalid.

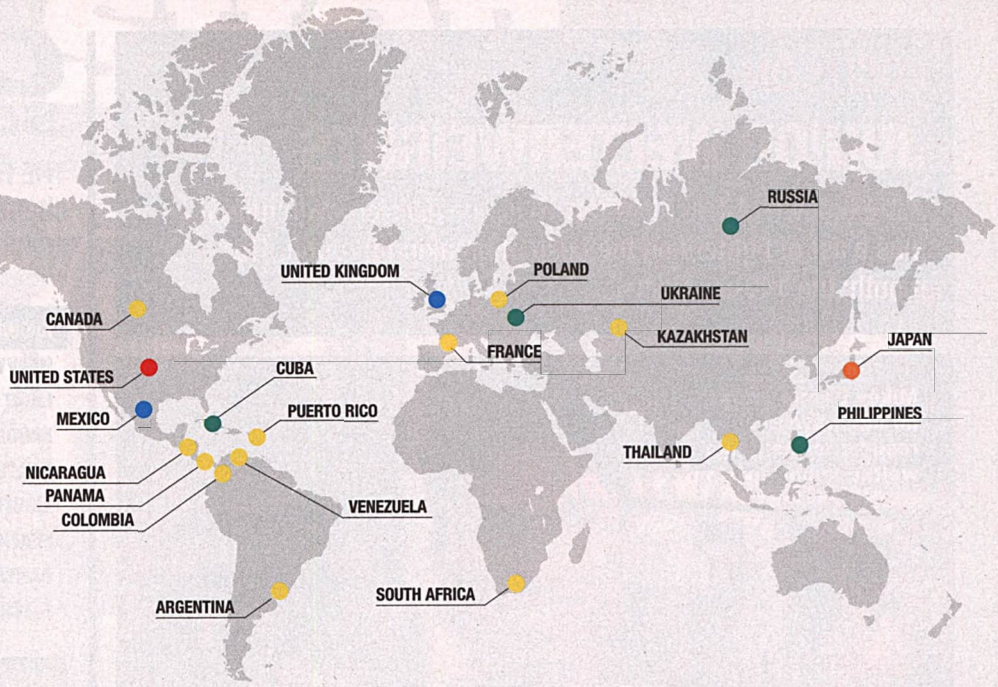
RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

●	UNITED STATES	38	▲3
●	MEXICO	24	▲1
●	UNITED KINGDOM	22	▼1
●	JAPAN	17	▲1
●	RUSSIA	9	
●	PHILIPPINES	6	
●	CUBA	5	
●	UKRAINE	5	▼1
●	ARGENTINA	4	
●	SOUTH AFRICA	4	▼1
●	NICARAGUA	3	
●	PANAMA	3	
●	PUERTO RICO	3	▼1
●	THAILAND	3	
●	VENEZUELA	3	
●	CANADA	2	
●	COLOMBIA	2	▲1
●	FRANCE	2	
●	KAZAKHSTAN	2	
●	POLAND	2	
	AUSTRALIA	1	
	BULGARIA	1	
	CAMEROON	1	
	CONGO	1	
	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	1	
	GEORGIA	1	
	GHANA	1	
	IRELAND	1	
	LATVIA	1	
	MONTENEGRO	1	
	NAMIBIA	1	
	NEW ZEALAND	1	
	SWEDEN	1	▲1
	UGANDA	1	

Countries out (from last month): *China (Zou Shiming)*

Countries in: *Sweden (Badou Jack)*

Note: *Mikey Garcia of the U.S. is rated in two divisions, junior welterweight and lightweight.*



THEN VS. NOW

Mexico seemed to be in a freefall as recently as the August 2016 issue of THE RING Magazine, as the traditional powerhouse had only 17 fighters in the ratings and had dropped below the U.K. into third place on the world list. The Mexicans have rallied. They now have 24, two more than the U.K. Here are the rated Mexicans in August 2016 and currently.

DIVISION	THEN	NOW
HEAVYWEIGHTS	0	1
CRUISERWEIGHTS	0	0
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	0	0
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	1	1
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	1	1
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS	1	0
WELTERWEIGHTS	0	0
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS	0	0
LIGHTWEIGHTS	0	1
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS	2	5
FEATHERWEIGHTS	2	3
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS	2	5
BANTAMWEIGHTS	0	1
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS	1	2
FLYWEIGHTS	2	1
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS	4	2
STRAWWEIGHTS	1	1
TOTAL	17	24

MOST DIVERSE

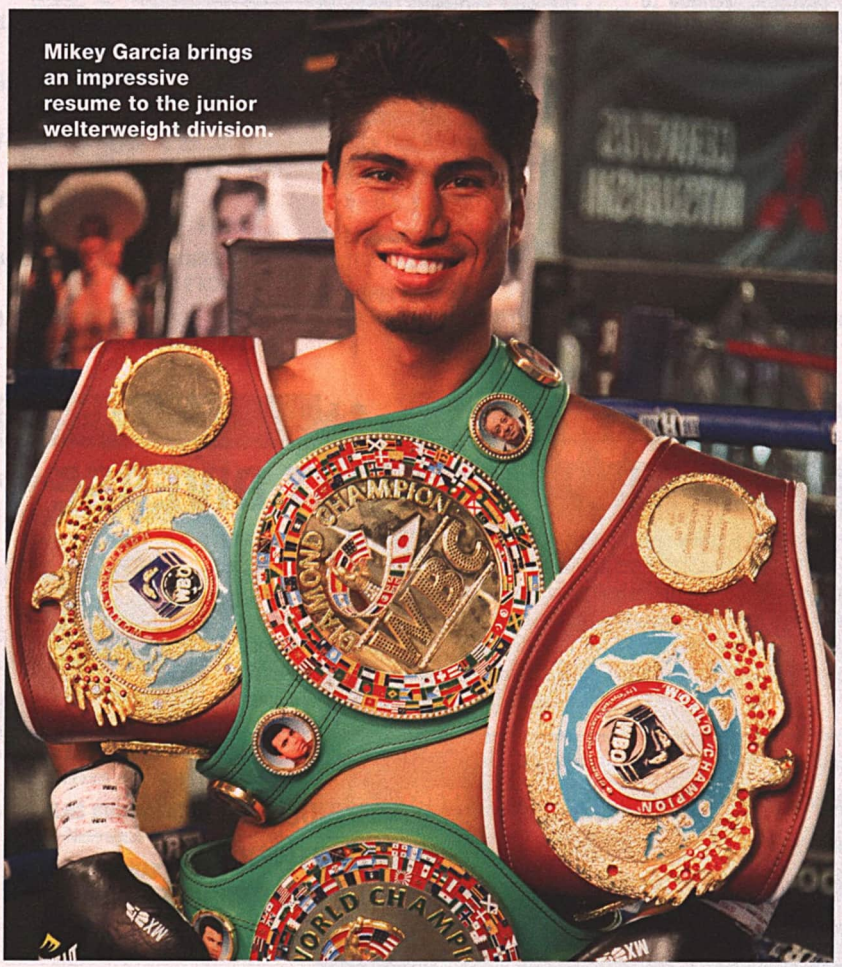
At least four countries are represented in each of the 17 divisions. The most diverse weight class? Middleweight. The least? Three weight classes are tied. Here's how it breaks down (in order of number of countries).

10	MIDDLEWEIGHT
9	LIGHTWEIGHT, BANTAMWEIGHT
8	JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT
7	HEAVYWEIGHT, CRUISERWEIGHT, LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT AND FLYWEIGHT
6	JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT, JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT AND STRAWWEIGHT
5	WELTERWEIGHT, JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT AND JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT
4	SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT, JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT AND FEATHERWEIGHT

FOCUS ON . . .

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

A breakdown of THE RING Top 10 in one division each month, plus a list of fighters on the cusp of breaking through. This month: the 140-pounders.



Mikey Garcia brings an impressive resume to the junior welterweight division.

MOST WEEKS RATED: VIKTOR POSTOL **211**

FEWEST WEEKS RATED: MIKEY GARCIA **5**

OLDEST: EDUARD TROYANOVSKY **37**

YOUNGEST: JOSH TAYLOR **26**

MOST FIGHTS: GARCIA **37**

FEWEST FIGHTS: TAYLOR **10**

HIGHEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: RANCES BARTHELEMY, TERENCE CRAWFORD, GARCIA, SERGEY LIPINETS, ANTONIO OROZCO, REGIS PROGRAIS, TAYLOR **100 PERCENT**

LOWEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: ADRIAN GRANADOS **72 PERCENT**

MOST KOS: GARCIA **30**

FEWEST KOS: TAYLOR **9**

LONGEST CURRENT WINNING STREAK: GARCIA **37 FIGHTS**

ON THE POUND-FOR-POUND LIST: CRAWFORD **NO. 3**, GARCIA **NO. 9**

TITLEHOLDERS IN THE TOP 10: CRAWFORD **RING, WBA, WBC, WBO**

ON THE CUSP (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER): ADRIEN BRONER, PEDRO CAMPA, JACK CATTERALL, JOSE RAMIREZ, ANTHONY YIGIT

OLD SCHOOL 8

THE RING staff members' current champions in the original eight weight classes.

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL RING MAGAZINE EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: TYSON FURY
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: LEO SANTA CRUZ
BANTAMWEIGHT: NAOYA INOUE
FLYWEIGHT: KAZUTO IOKA

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WELTERWEIGHT: KEITH THURMAN
LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: LEO SANTA CRUZ
BANTAMWEIGHT: NAOYA INOUE
FLYWEIGHT: KAZUTO IOKA

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MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: LEO SANTA CRUZ
BANTAMWEIGHT: NAOYA INOUE
FLYWEIGHT: DONNIE NIETES

MIKE COPPINGER SENIOR WRITER

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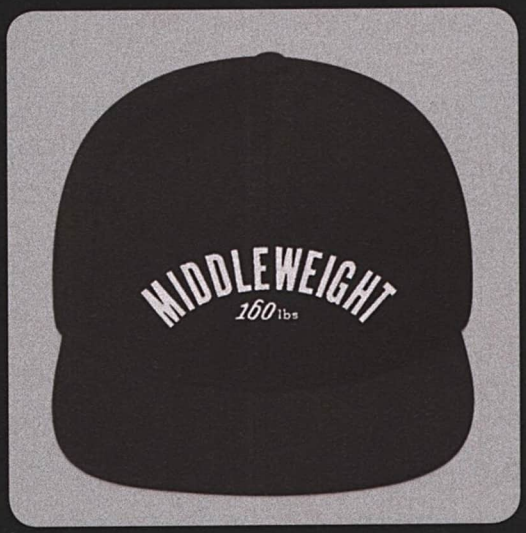
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: LEO SANTA CRUZ
BANTAMWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ
FLYWEIGHT: KAZUTO IOKA

Note: *This is how the weights break down: Heavyweight includes cruiserweight, light heavyweight includes super middleweight, all divisions middleweight through flyweight include the "junior" versions, and flyweight also includes strawweight.*

MATT TUCKER

SHOP



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Mikey Garcia has returned from a 2½-year hiatus from boxing with a vengeance.

RELUCTANT WARRIOR

MIKEY GARCIA HAS DONE PRETTY WELL FOR A GUY WHO NEVER WANTED TO BE A FIGHTER

By **Michael Rosenthal**

AMANDA WESTCOTT

The late 1990s were exciting times for Fernando Vargas, Robert Garcia and the Garcia family.

Vargas, the brash former Olympian, became one of the brightest stars on the planet and Garcia won a world title under the guidance of Robert's father, Eduardo Garcia, a strawberry field worker-turned-trainer from Mexico who worked his magic at the old La Colonia Gym in Oxnard, California, a rough seaside town about an hour northwest of Los Angeles.

All the while, the baby of the Garcia family occupied the background, listening quietly to conversations that always returned to boxing, hanging out in the gym when he was bored and traveling with family members to watch Robert and Vargas fight.

This is life in a boxing family, where siblings and cousins, aunts and uncles often go along for the wild ride.

Little did anyone know at the time that this boy was absorbing it all even though he had no interest in becoming a boxer, at least not then. He learned almost unconsciously how to position his feet and hands, to throw straight punches, to do things properly. And, perhaps most important, he learned by watching Vargas and his brother that hard work can lead to great success.

Those lessons are paying enormous dividends today.

"Mikey is just so smart in the ring," Robert said. "That's what makes him so good. He does everything right."

Mikey Garcia enjoyed visiting the gym from time to time as a child, he said, because that's where some of his six older siblings – Mikey is the youngest by 12 years – happened to be most of the time. It had nothing to do with boxing, which held no fascination for him.

"It's just what my brothers did. That's it," he said.

His first experience as a combatant – well, a potential combatant – illustrates his disinterest. Robert tells the sad story.

"Mikey always hated boxing," he said. "He never wanted to do anything. One day me and my dad took him to a gym, when he was 5 or 6, just to hang out. They had an amateur program and a lot of little kids were there. One of the

Garcia has friends in high places: That's featherweight contender Abner Mares (left) and MMA star Jose Aldo with him at Robert Garcia's gym.

fathers challenged my dad. He said, 'Let's have your son spar with my son.' My dad was very prideful; if someone challenged him, he didn't say no. So my dad said alright.

"But Mikey didn't want to spar and he started crying. My dad was so embarrassed that his son said 'no' that he spanked Mikey right in front of everybody. My brother Danny and I took him away from my dad, we took him outside. Danny and I actually teared up, we felt so bad for our little brother."

Mikey remained steadfast in his decision not to fight. He did well in school, always bringing home good grades. He was a leader among his friends, cousins and nephews who were his age. He even fooled around with boxing technique at times, learning little tricks at home and at the gym when he was there.

But actually exchanging punches? No.

"Some kids I knew dreamed about being a boxer, about winning world championships. I didn't have that," he said. "I never saw myself fighting, not as a kid.

He enjoyed the success of his brother, though. He remembers in detail how Robert picked apart Harold Warren to win the vacant IBF junior lightweight title in Miami in March 1998, when Mikey was 10 years old.

He still experiences joy from the memory even though he has far surpassed his brother's accomplishments, as if Robert's success is somehow more important than his.

He recalled that glorious night and everything that followed as he sat at the dining room table of a house now-trainer Robert bought for his fighters, who work out in an adjacent gym.

"I remember the whole family planning the trip to Florida, about 20 people. My brothers, sisters, cousins, everyone," he said. "It was very exciting. Robert won almost every round. We knew enough about boxing to know that he won the fight but we had to wait for the official result.

"When the announcement was made, I remember, everyone was very, very happy. It was a great night."

Mikey wouldn't find joy in boxing again for many years even though he finally drifted into it as he approached his 14th birthday, when it became clear in an instant that he had a knack for the sport.

He, Robert and a number of family members hit the road again, this time to see Mikey's nephew take part in an amateur tournament in the Reseda neighborhood of Los Angeles. One of the young boxers had earned a formidable reputation but he didn't have an opponent. Robert asked Mikey, "You want to fight him?" Mikey replied without much thought, "OK."

He borrowed a mouthpiece, shoes, trunks and gloves and – with no formal training – stepped into the ring for an exhibition with the experienced amateur boxer. Mikey and the other boy fought on even terms, although his opponent was declared the winner.

"It was actually kind of fun," he

said. "I didn't have any training but, growing up in it, you know what to do. I did pretty well. It wasn't a competition really but they gave him a gold medal and me a silver medal. People who saw me said I had a very natural style, turning and countering and stuff. After that, I started to train daily at the gym.

"A few months after I turned 14, I had my first fight in a real amateur competition. I fought at Hawaiian Gardens (in Los Angeles). I remember walking out from the locker room to the ring and feeling nervous. I thought, 'I'm really going in there. This isn't sparring; this is real.' Once I was in the ring, it was natural, it was easy for me."

Mikey still didn't see himself as a boxer. "It was just something to do," he said. He wanted to be a cop. He would later earn an associate degree at the local community college in Oxnard and then graduate from the Ventura County Police and Sheriff Reserve Academy, a significant step toward becoming a reserve officer.

Robert knew immediately after his silver-medal performance in that exhibition that his brother had vast potential, but was convinced his lack of desire would send him in a more conventional direction, most likely into law enforcement.

Mikey continued to train with his father and brother, though. And he progressed more quickly than anyone could've imagined.

He and Robert believe he had between 12 and 14 amateur fights when, at 15 years old, he managed to reach the finals of the U.S. Junior Olympics in Alexandria, Louisana, in which some competitors had 100 or more amateur fights. He boxed his way to the gold medal match, where he lost a split decision to Marco Concepcion – yes, Mikey still remembers the name – from New Jersey.

"At that point I was thinking, 'Let's see what happens. Let's see how far I can go,'" Mikey said.

Mikey still hadn't made the decision to make boxing his vocation but he trained as if he did. That included harrowing sparring sessions against some of the best professional fighters in the world, beginning when he was a teenager.

He was one of Manny Pacquiao's main sparring partners when Pacquiao was preparing for his rematch with Erik Morales in 2006, when the Filipino was at the peak of his abilities and Mikey was 19. He learned a great deal and swears he held his own.

And Mikey and those close to him love talking about sparring sessions he had with the late Edwin Valero when Mikey was around 16. Valero, one of the biggest punchers of his generation, was knocking out one sparring partner after another but couldn't – or at least didn't – hurt the kid from Oxnard, who had learned enough to protect himself yet give Valero good work.

It was after a sparring session when Mikey was 15 or 16 that Rudy Hernandez, the brother of Genaro Hernandez and a successful trainer, approached Robert about his little brother.

"I paid close attention to Mikey one day, watching him spar," Hernandez said. "I walked up to Robert afterward and I said, 'That's the best fighter you guys have.' And Robert was working with a lot of good fighters already. I told him, 'He's going to be the star.'

"Mikey didn't look like much. He just rarely got hit and he rarely missed a punch. That's one thing that he and (Gennady) Golovkin have in common: They always know their distance, exactly where they need to be whether on the attack or on defense. I just thought he was amazing."

Mikey was in the let's-see-how-far-I-can-go mode when he turned professional at 18 years old in 2006 and steamrolled everyone in his path.

He knocked out all but four of his first 30 opponents to earn a shot at the WBO featherweight title owned by vicious veteran Orlando Salido, the same fighter who would outpoint amateur legend Vasyl Lomachenko two fights later.

They fought on January 19, 2013, at Madison Square Garden in New York.

HIGH FIVE

Mikey Garcia, a three-division titleholder at 29, seems to be building a Hall of Fame resume. Here are his five best performances so far (in chronological order).

ORLANDO SALIDO

Date / site: Jan. 19, 2013 / New York
Result: TD 8
Background: Garcia, who put Salido down four times, won a technical decision and the WBO 126-pound title when his nose was broken by a headbutt.

ROMAN MARTINEZ

Date / site: Nov. 9, 2013 / Corpus Christi, Texas
Result: KO 8
Background: Garcia moved to 130 pounds and stopped a proven commodity in Martinez to win his second WBO title in the same calendar year.

ELIO ROJAS

Date / site: July 30, 2016 / Brooklyn
Result: TKO 5
Background: Roman Martinez and Juan Burgos were tougher foes but this was Garcia's first fight in 2½ years. He looked rusty but got the result he wanted.

DEJAN ZLATICANIN

Date / site: Jan. 28, 2017 / Las Vegas
Result: KO 3
Background: Zlaticanin was unbeaten and had won the vacant WBC 135-pound title in his previous fight yet was overwhelmed by Garcia's ability and power.

ADRIEN BRONER

Date / site: July 29, 2017 / Brooklyn
Result: UD 12
Background: Garcia moved up to 140 pounds to face the four-division titleholder but almost completely neutralized him and won easily.

Mikey put Salido down four times and won a technical decision after his nose was broken by a headbutt in Round 8.

He followed that with a fourth-round knockout of once-terrifying Juan Manuel Lopez after losing his title on the scales. Then, moving up to 130 pounds for his next fight, he stopped Roman Martinez in the eighth round to win the WBO junior lightweight title.

Three fights against big-name opponents, three victories, major titles in two divisions. Garcia was on a roll.

And then, after a single defense of his new title, he left boxing for 2½ years.

Mikey's dispute with his career-long promoter, Top Rank, was complicated. In short, Garcia sued Bob Arum and Co. in 2014 because he believed they tried to lock him into an extended contract that wasn't fair.

He said he tried more than once to renegotiate the agreement and stay with Top Rank – even a year into the legal battle – but the company stood firm, insisting that the contract was valid and enforceable. As a result, he felt he had no choice but to allow this prolonged fight – his toughest fight in some ways – to play out.

"They shut me down three times," he said. "After the third time, I said, 'Forget this. We're already a year into this. I'm going to see this to the very, very end.'"

Mikey said he didn't miss fighting, which was consistent with his lifelong take-it-or-leave-it approach to the sport. And, he added, he needed a break after more than a decade of non-stop training and fighting. He could use the time for his body and mind to heal.

"I was getting burned out. I wanted to enjoy life," he said.

His self-imposed hiatus was challenging, though. From a competitive standpoint, he had built tremendous momentum at the time he walked away. There were no guarantees that he could regain it when – if? – he returned to boxing.

And there were financial considerations, as he had a wife and three children to support. Of course, he was smart. He had purchased some rental property with his boxing earnings, which brought in enough money to cover his expenses, but he couldn't make a comfortable living solely from the real estate he owned.

He needed to return to boxing. And when he finally did, after 28 years of keeping boxing out of his heart, he finally realized he was in love with the sport.

Mikey and Top Rank reached a settlement in April of last year that allowed them to go their separate ways. He was a free agent, able to chart his own destiny. He could choose which managers, promoters and networks to work with.

No victory in the ring has meant as much to him.

"Go back and watch replays of my fights with Salido and Martinez (on YouTube)," he said. "Two titles in two divisions in one year. That would be a huge accomplishment for any fighter. Watch me win the titles. I'm not even jumping up and down or anything. I was expected to win. It was no big deal to me.

"That (the victory over Top Rank) was different. That felt better than winning any fight. I went head-to-head with a big, big company that had been on top of the boxing business for 50 years or whatever and I won. I beat them.

"And when I finally got out of the contract, a lot of people doubted me. They said I wouldn't be the same after the layoff and at a higher weight. I wouldn't be as fast, as strong, as focused. All valid points, by the way. I told myself that I was going to prove everyone wrong – Top Rank, the doubters, everyone.

"All that ignited something in me. That love, that passion for the sport was suddenly there."

Mikey did prove the doubters wrong. Many thought he looked rusty in his comeback fight against Elio Rojas in July of last year but he put Rojas down twice and knocked him out in the fifth round, becoming the first to stop the tough Dominican.

And then he fought like a man trying to make up for lost time.

Dejan Zlaticanin of Montenegro had just won the vacant WBC lightweight title. He was undefeated, highly regarded and motivated to retain his brand new belt. And Mikey obliterated him inside three rounds in January, giving him a title in a third division in only his second fight back.

Six months later, fighting at yet another weight, 140 pounds, he turned in arguably his best performance by easily outpointing four-division titleholder Adrien Broner in a fight many experts thought would be a significant challenge.

Those victories elevated Mikey into the pound-for-pound conversation, which is reserved for special fighters only.

And, more motivated than ever, he is just getting started. He said he would like to fight RING and WBA lightweight titleholder Jorge Linares, who was scheduled to defend against Luke Campbell on September 23, but is open to fighting anyone – including Top Rank stars Lomachenko and Terence Crawford – at 135, 140 and even 147 pounds.

The kid who never wanted to fight has come a long, long way.

"I honestly never could've imagined this," Robert Garcia said. "I could see Mikey's son (2-year-old Django) becoming a successful boxer. He loves coming to the gym; he's always with gloves on. Mikey was never that kid. Mikey didn't come to the gym much. For him to approach what Fernando (Vargas) did is really something.

"Fernando was one of those few fighters who, in his prime, was a true superstar. He could fight Shibata Flores and still fill up the Mandalay Bay (in Las Vegas). It was all Fernando. He didn't need a superstar as a dance partner to fill up an arena, just like Canelo (Alvarez) is now.

"In two, three fights, I think Mikey can be one of those guys who can do it." RING

Garcia demonstrated against Dejan Zlaticanin in January that he was once again a fighter to be feared.

Garcia's 2-year-old son, Django, a gym rat, seems to have the passion for boxing his father never did.

MATT TUCKER (TOP); AP

U.S. STARS ALIGNED

A WAVE OF GIFTED YOUNG AMERICAN FIGHTERS IS BEGINNING TO WREAK HAVOC

By **Doug Fischer**

American boxing is in the good hands of these fighters: (left to right) Keith Thurman, Terence Crawford, Mikey Garcia, Errol Spence Jr., Danny Garcia, Jermall Charlo, Jermell Charlo, Gary Russell Jr., Demetrius Andrade and Robert Easter Jr.

With Gennady Golovkin and Vasyl Lomachenko leading the charge of former amateur standouts from the post-Soviet Bloc nations and the U.K. and Japanese boxing scenes burning hot in recent years, patriotic American fans can be forgiven if they've begun to wonder if the days of U.S. dominance in the sport are a thing of the past.

Their worries are not unfounded. American stalwarts Shane Mosley and Tim Bradley recently announced their retirements. Current pound-for-pound king Andre Ward and other talented Americans, including Lamont Peterson and the Dirrell brothers, Andre and Anthony, are in their 30s. And former titleholders such as Daniel Jacobs (who turned 30 in February) and Shawn Porter (who turned 30 in October) are already at their peaks.

However, U.S. fans need not worry. As the veterans enter the second halves of their careers, a new guard of American boxers 30 or younger – led by Terence Crawford (30 on September 29) and Mikey Garcia (29) – has emerged. Crawford recently earned undisputed-champion status by obliterating Julius Indongo in a showdown for all of the major 140-pound titles. Garcia, a three-division titleholder currently reigning at lightweight, took four-division beltholder Adrien Broner to school in a 12-round junior welterweight bout.

Young titleholders Jessie Magdaleno (25) and Jarrett Hurd (27) possess the skillset and character needed for long reigns. Gervonta Davis (22) recently lost his 130-pound title on the scale but still figures to be a force at lightweight.

Erickson Lubin (21), Jesse Hart (28) and David Benavidez (20) were all scheduled to fight for their first world titles at press time. Joseph Diaz Jr. (24) and Marcus Browne (26) are in line to get their first crack at major belts by early 2018. And colorful Jarrell "Big Baby" Miller (29) might develop into a force at heavyweight.

So cheer up, U.S. fans. The future looks bright for American boxing and the following 10 fighters are the best of the 30-and-under crowd. They are listed in order based on a combination of ability, accomplishments and recent performances.»

Crawford might be the most complete of all American fighters.

1. TERENCE CRAWFORD

Division: Junior welterweight
Standing: RING champion; WBA, WBC and WBO titleholder; RING No. 3 pound-for-pound
Age: 30
Record: 32-0 (23 KOs)
Hometown: Omaha, Nebraska

Style and attributes: Crawford is a versatile, ambidextrous boxer-puncher. "He's equally as good from either stance," Stephen Edwards, the respected trainer of junior middleweight contender Julian Williams, said of Crawford's switch-hitting prowess. "He has elite-level speed and quickness. He's a very hard puncher to the body and head. He's not Roy Jones-type athletic but he's among the most athletic fighters in boxing."

What makes him special: Crawford unified the WBO, WBC, IBF and WBA 140-pound titles (and earned THE RING championship) by dominating then-undefeated beltholders Viktor Postol (with a clear-cut unanimous decision in 2016) and Julius Indongo (via a three-round KO in August). Prior to that, Crawford had a brief but distinguished lightweight title reign, defeating Ricky Burns in Glasgow for the WBO belt and defending it against then-undefeated Yuriorkis Gamboa and Raymundo Beltran (for the vacant RING title).

"He seems to be the most ambitious young champ in boxing," said Edwards. "He has a great sense of adjustment. Once he starts winning rounds in a fight, he rarely loses another one. He also seems to have a great team around him, where egos are checked. He has three coaches but there is no reported friction."

What's holding him back: Landing significant fights with future Hall of Famers and/or fellow elite boxers appears to be the biggest roadblock to Crawford's stardom. Manny Pacquiao is too old, Vasyl Lomachenko is too small and promotional/network issues could bar a showdown with Mikey Garcia. Even a move to the 147-pound division could prove frustrating. "In the future, he may have a tough time getting big fights at welterweight, because most of the big names are with the PBC," said Edwards.

★★★

2. MIKEY GARCIA

Division: Lightweight/junior welterweight
Standing: WBC lightweight titleholder; RING No. 1 lightweight; RING No. 2 junior welterweight; RING No. 9 pound-for-pound
Age: 29
Record: 37-0 (30 KOs)
Hometown: Riverside, California

Style and attributes: Garcia is a hard-hitting technician with exceptional counterpunching and defensive prowess. "He could be the best

CRAWFORD: MIKEY WILLIAMS; GARCIA: MATT TUCKER

technical puncher in the game," said Edwards. "His punch technique is on par with Alexis Arguello and Juan Manuel Marquez. He throws every punch correctly and hard. He's an efficient assassin. Defensively, he has the same calm. He catches, parries or steps over nice and easy while always keeping his hands up. Garcia is not easy to hit."

What makes him special: No matter what challenges are in front of him – in or outside of the ring – Garcia always manages to keep his poise and maturity. "He seems to have the proper demeanor for the stressful job at hand," Edwards said. "He doesn't get too high, he doesn't get too low. He stays within himself and has perfect technique all the time. He also has a great team around him with his brother and father heading the corner."

What's holding him back: Garcia is known for his steely focus in the ring but the course of his career isn't so clear. The Southern Californian has no idea whom to fight next. He recently called out 154-pound beltholder Miguel Cotto on social media. "The one thing that could be holding him back is deciding what weight class to compete in," Edwards said. "If he's going to stay above 135 (pounds), he's going to have to pick the correct fights, because he's not that tall and he's not an overwhelming athlete."

★★★

3. KEITH THURMAN

Division: Welterweight
Standing: WBA/WBC titleholder; RING No.1
Age: 28
Record: 28-0 (22 KOs)
Hometown: Clearwater, Florida

Style and attributes: Thurman is a mobile boxer-puncher with world-class speed and agility. "Thurman has some of the better feet in boxing," Edwards said. "He skates around the ring and he can stop on a dime and shoot power shots. He reminds me of a physically tougher Acelino Freitas. Thurman also can punch with either hand. He's not a one-punch KO artist like his nickname suggests but he does pack a solid punch. In an era where fighters don't know how to cut the ring off, Thurman will be tough to beat."

What makes him special: Thurman unified major 147-pound belts by handing Danny Garcia (who brought a 33-0 record into their fight) his first loss, via split decision. He also owns victories over former titleholders Shawn Porter, Luis Collazo, Robert Guerrero, Julio Diaz, Carlos Quintana and Jan Zaveck, as well as late stoppages of then-unbeaten fringe contender Diego Chaves and still-dangerous gatekeeper Jesus Soto Karass during his march up the welterweight rankings.

"Thurman seems to have it all," Edwards said. "Good looks, he's articulate and he can fight his butt off. He's a network's dream. He also happens to be in a glamour division." Veteran trainer and former light heavyweight contender John Scully believes Thurman's fighting heart is what makes him special. "He showed tremendous heart and determination against Luis Collazo when he ate that horrific body shot," said Scully. "I was at the fight and his initial body language and reaction told me he was on his way out, but his fighter mentality kicked in and he came back for a very impressive victory. That moment told me more about Keith than anything he has done in all of his other fights combined. He's a real warrior."

What's holding him back: Thurman should be one of the stars of the sport given his recent platforms (NBC, CBS and ESPN), but inactivity has hampered his rise. "The last time Thurman fought three times in a year it was 2013," Edwards said. "The last time he fought twice in a year it was 2015. After each of his biggest victories he has taken off until the next calendar year. If Thurman was on network TV three times a year he would be a crossover star, but every time he gets a big victory he disappears."

★★★

4. ERROL SPENCE JR.

Division: Welterweight
Standing: IBF titleholder; RING No. 2
Age: 27
Record: 22-0 (19 KOs)
Hometown: DeSoto, Texas

Style and attributes: Spence is an aggressive southpaw boxer-puncher with excellent technique and world-class strength and power, as well as an elite amateur background. "Spence is brutally even-handed," said Edwards. "His right hook is just as hard as his left hand. He goes to the body as much as he goes to the head. He stays in punching position at all times with his hands up and feet up under him. He's very efficient in walking his opponents down. Errol will always be hell late in fights. He's like a horror movie to these welterweights. He's always the stronger guy in the ring."

What makes him special: Spence is arguably the least accomplished fighter on this list but he also appears to have the most upside. He

answered questions about his chin, stamina and character with his title-winning effort against Kell Brook, in which he traveled to the lion's den (Sheffield, England), took hard shots from the veteran and came on strong to score a late stoppage. The 2012 U.S. Olympian has stopped his last nine opponents, which include former 140-pound beltholder Chris Algieri, former European champ Leonard Bundu and rugged fringe contender Chris Van Heerden.

"Errol has all the markings of the future star of boxing," said Scully. "I don't know much about his out-of-the-ring persona, but his in-ring persona is all that a fan could want or hope for. Super strong, killer instincts, skills for days. No upper-echelon guy is going to rush to fight this kid unless there is a lot of money on the table to go with it."

What's holding him back: Though talented, Spence is a bit methodical, not that hard to hit and not the fastest welterweight out there. "He's been compared to Sugar Ray Leonard but their styles are just different," said Edwards. "Spence does not have what you call elite-level speed. His speed is just solid. He uses timing to get to his opponents. Spence reminds me more of a young Michael Moorer mixed with Winky Wright. I'm interested to see how he deals with the speed of Keith Thurman and Terence Crawford."

★★★

5. DANNY GARCIA

Division: Welterweight
Standing: RING No. 5
Age: 29
Record: 33-1 (19 KOs)
Hometown: Philadelphia

Style and attributes: Garcia is a durable boxer-puncher gifted with brute strength, timing, supreme confidence and a cool head. "Garcia does not get rattled by losing a round or two," said Edwards. "He has a great chin and sturdy body. He's not afraid to get hit, which makes his timing the best in boxing. He can literally stand in harm's way and punch exactly when his opponent is punching. This unique ability keeps him in every fight. Garcia is also a hard puncher. He can crack with both hands and he punches with bad intentions."

What makes him special: Garcia isn't the most naturally gifted boxer, but he usually finds a way to win, a quality that earned him the RING championship at 140 pounds. "Garcia has won fights he wasn't supposed to win," said Edwards. "We are in an era where undefeated fighters won't take fights where they are the underdogs. Danny took three (Amir Khan, Lucas Matthysse and Thurman) and went 2-1 in those fights. He has the 'DSG' brand, good looks and he happens to be the best fighter in a fighting city, Philly."

What's holding him back: Garcia might be the least talented (in terms of athleticism) of the elite welterweights. Also, one has to wonder where he is mentally after suffering his first loss. "Danny is an excellent fighter but he's not a super athlete," said Edwards, "he's not super fast or twitchy. When you reach your peak weight, which welterweight most likely is for him, this can become a problem. I thought he stayed right with Thurman, but the difference in athleticism and footspeed was evident."

Scully is curious to see how Garcia rebounds from his first loss. "We can assume that he will be just fine," he said, "but there have been good fighters in the past who have lost a big fight while they were on a hot streak and it affected them permanently. There are a lot of big fights out there for Danny now, but we need to see him back in the ring again in order to see where he really stands."

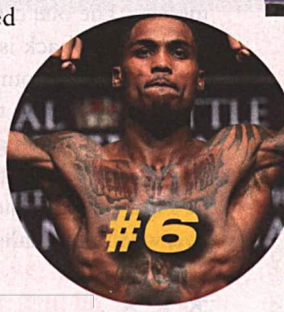
★★★

6. JERMALL CHARLO

Division: Middleweight
Standing: RING No. 10
Age: 27
Record: 26-0 (20 KOs)
Hometown: Houston

Style and attributes: Charlo is a passionate boxer-puncher gifted with world-class speed, sharp reflexes and a killer instinct. He also possesses an excellent jab and solid technique. "He's tall for the weight but he's not uncoordinated and gangly," said Edwards. "He has enormous physical strength and he's a really good puncher. He also has good punch variety. He never abandons his jab, which is the most important punch in boxing. He also has a really good chin."

What makes him special: Charlo announced his presence to the world-class boxing scene with brutal stoppages of still-dangerous veteran Cornelius Bundrage (a 154-pound title victory), respected RING-rated junior middleweight Julian Williams and sanctioning body-rated middleweight Jorge Sebastian Heiland. He also owns a decision over still-serviceable former junior middleweight beltholder Austin Trout.



"Jermall is one of the better younger fighters at 160," said Edwards. "His biggest threats in the division are over 30. He also has the 'it' factor. For the most part, he says the right things in interviews and he's a good-looking kid. He also has an exciting style and big punch needed for middleweight.

Thurman (right) got past countryman Danny Garcia in his last fight.

He happens to have a twin brother who is a (154-pound) champion and undefeated. This is great for marketing."

What's holding him back: The sky seems to be the limit for Charlo but he's still new in the 160-pound division, where his penchant for exchanging hard punches could cost him dearly. "The only thing that stands out as a flaw is he's easy to hit," said Edwards. "Sometimes having a good chin can be a curse. Trout was able to hit him with straight left hands consistently. Williams was able to hit him with straight right hands consistently. Being hit so often and clean can come back and bite you eventually."

★★★

7. GARY RUSSELL JR.

Division: Featherweight
Standing: WBC titleholder; RING No. 2
Age: 29
Record: 28-1 (17 KOs)
Hometown: Capitol Heights, Maryland

Style and attributes: Russell is a technical boxer gifted with phenomenal speed and explosive reflexes. He also has an elite amateur background. "He has incredible handspeed," said Edwards. "He has a great right hook. If you listen to him talk, you will find that he has a very high boxing IQ. He seems to have excellent stamina and his punching power has improved over the years. He showed lots of heart in his loss to Vasyl Lomachenko, which will serve him well moving forward.

What makes him special: Although the 2008 U.S. Olympian fell short in his first title bout, against Lomachenko in 2014, there's no shame in being outclassed and outpointed by the Ukrainian amateur legend. Russell rebounded from his only loss by blasting faded-but-still-dangerous two-division titleholder Jhonny Gonzalez (in four rounds for a 126-pound belt) and followed that victory with a blowout of Patrick Hyland and a one-sided beatdown of rugged mandatory challenger Oscar Escandon. He's arguably the most talented boxer from the D.C.-Maryland area since Hall of Famer Mark "Too Sharp" Johnson.

"Gary lost a little (luster) when he lost to Lomachenko and that's too bad, because the fact is he simply ran into a super-special talent who had his number that day," said Scully. "But people shouldn't forget that Gary is more than likely still a big, big problem for anyone else in his weight division."

What's holding him back: As Scully noted, the other standouts in the 126-pound division are not eager to face Russell, whose career has been hampered by hand injuries, weight issues and recent inactivity. "For whatever reason, he's never in line for big fights," said Edwards. "You have Leo Santa Cruz, Carl Frampton, Abner Mares and Scott Quigg all hovering around the PBC stable and not one of them have fought Gary Russell. I think he would be the favorite to win each of the fights except Santa Cruz, and that would be even money as far as odds, but Russell never seems to be in the mix for the big fight."

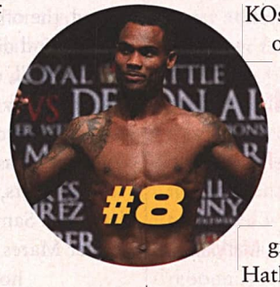
★★★

8. JERMELL CHARLO

Division: Junior middleweight
Standing: WBC titleholder; RING No. 2
Age: 27
Record: 29-0 (14 KOs)
Hometown: Houston

Style and attributes: Charlo is a classic stand-up boxer who works everything off an excellent jab and deft ring generalship. "He has a great jab and really good feet," said Edwards. "He doesn't have a high KO percentage but he has scored some nasty KOs with one punch. He seems to have good physical strength and good stamina. He used to be a one-two (combination) fighter but he's developing a hard left hook. He is also used to going the distance in tight fights and he has pulled them out."

What makes him special: Charlo is sometimes known as the less entertaining twin – a reputation earned with monotonous distance bouts against the likes of Vanes Martirosyan, Gabriel Rosado and Demetrius Hopkins – but he has begun to emulate his brother's exciting boxer-puncher style with a one-punch KO of John Jackson and a dominating stoppage of mandatory challenger Charles Hatley. At press time he was slated to face THE RING's 2016 Prospect of the Year, Erickson Lubin.



"He's an undefeated identical twin who happens to be a world champion," said Edwards. "He speaks well and he has a good look. He was also matched tough early on as a prospect and got through it without a loss."

What's holding him back: "Unfortunately, with twins everyone compares them," said Edwards. "Although both Charlo twins are undefeated, most people assume his brother is the better twin. From a boxing perspective, I think he gets caught in-between styles sometimes. His brother has more KOs, and recently he has been scoring big KOs too. But John Jackson outboxed him and won like six rounds in a row against him before Charlo eventually caught him. Jackson is not considered an elite boxer. Charlo fought a great fight against Charles Hatley in his next outing, so maybe it was the new trainer adjustment. But I am curious to see how he handles a boxer again."

★★★

9. DEMETRIUS ANDRADE

Division: Junior middleweight
Standing: RING's No. 4
Age: 29
Record: 24-0 (16 KOs)
Hometown: Providence, Rhode Island

Style and attributes: Andrade is a tall, rangy, versatile boxer with a high workrate, world-class athleticism and an elite amateur background. "Andrade has elite-level handspeed," said Edwards. "He can really get off. He has a good jab and a hard straight left hand to the body. He also throws good uppercuts on the inside. He's not easy to win rounds against because he's so active."

What makes him special: The 2007 world amateur champion and 2008 U.S. Olympian has notched split-decision victories over then-RING-rated Vanes Martirosyan and Jack Culcay (in Germany), and recently posted a 12th-round TKO of fringe contender Willie Nelson. He has unflappable confidence to go with his imposing height, reach and fluid speed. "He's almost 6-foot-1, he's a southpaw and he throws loads of punches," said Edwards. "Most fighters don't want to deal with that mix unless they have to. He also has an Olympic pedigree and he's a good interview."

What's holding him back: "Demetrius needs more network-friendly handlers," said Edwards. "It's really that simple. After almost 10 years as a pro without a loss, he hasn't built any real momentum. His layoffs will eventually affect his prime.

"From a boxing perspective, Andrade is fast and active but his punch technique and balance are not the best. You can catch him between shots. He also overpunches often, but he just hasn't fought the level of guy consistently who can take advantage of that (flaw). I was shocked to see his fight with Jack Culcay be so competitive. Culcay is about 5-foot-7 and he can't punch. But he seemed to get to Andrade."

Scully believes Andrade's biggest challenge will be to lure the big names into the ring. "Andrade is in a tough spot because talent-wise he is on par or above anyone else on any list of young guys who could carry boxing into the future, but I think that he has been invisible to a large degree," he said. "He is not nearly as well-known as guys like Spence, Garcia and Thurman, and that's a problem for a guy as talented as he is. A lot of guys, stylistically, may not be in a rush to go in against him but they can certainly use the reasoning that he is a high-risk, low-reward proposition at this point."

★★★

10. ROBERT EASTER JR.

Division: Lightweight
Standing: IBF titleholder; RING No. 3
Age: 26
Record: 20-0 (14 KOs)
Hometown: Toledo, Ohio

Style and attributes: Easter is a very tall, rangy boxer who can stick and move well, but also has the heart and durability to slug it out with opponents. "Easter has really good handspeed," said Edwards. "He has a fighter's mentality. He's shown a good chin and good stamina. He's tall but he goes to the body well. He also punches good in combination."

What makes him special: Easter is still learning and developing, but he's just as battle-tested as the more seasoned fighters on this list because of his hard-fought title victory over then-unbeaten Richard Commey, a well-traveled, hard-punching threat from Ghana, and his mandatory title defense against grizzled Russian pressure-fighter Denis Shafikov. Easter gutted out decisions over both RING-rated contenders.

"He's 5-foot-11 with a 76-inch (wingspan) and he makes 135 pounds," said Edwards. "He also has a whole town who supports him and he's benefited from grassroots promotion. He's closely affiliated with (Adrien Broner's) About Billions Promotions and he has a good local push behind him."

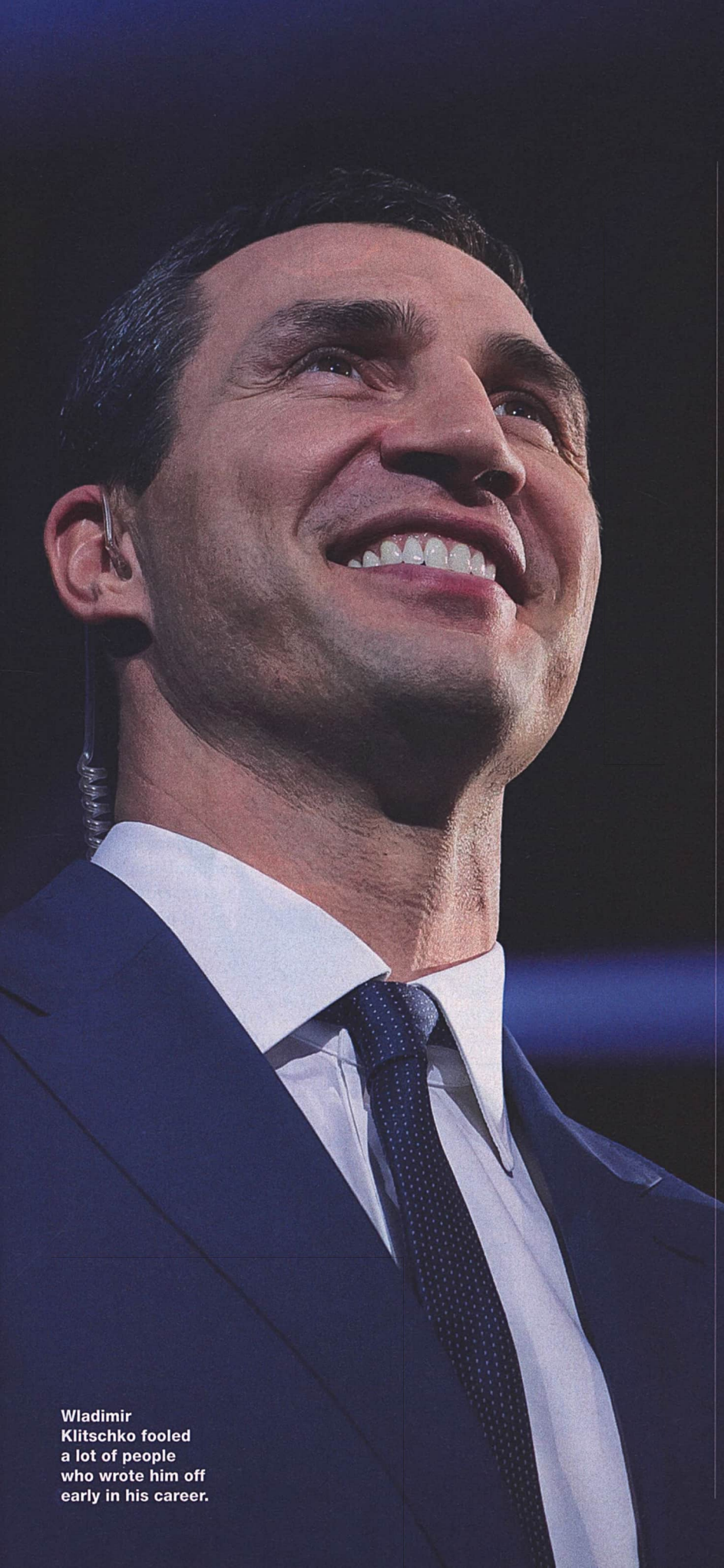
What's holding him back: Easter doesn't always use his uncommon height and reach during his fights. "His penchant to brawl made his fights with Commey and Shafikov harder than they had to be," said Edwards. "He abandoned his jab in both fights. I think making 135 pounds will be something he can only do for a couple more fights. Easter can punch but he's not a Bob Foster-type of puncher, although he carries that mentality. If he boxed more, the KOs would be easier and he would take less punishment."

Easter outclassed a good fighter in Denis Shafikov this past June.

REIGN MAN

WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO TRANSFORMED HIMSELF FROM A STALKER INTO A THINKING MAN'S BOXER AND RULED HIS DIVISION AS A RESULT

By **Mike Coppinger**



Wladimir Klitschko fooled a lot of people who wrote him off early in his career.

The sight was all too familiar. Wladimir Klitschko, considered the future of boxing's glamour division at the time, lying flat on his face or back. Hearing the 10 count. Struggling to find his footing in the ring – and in the sport.

Ross Puritty. Lamon Brewster. Corrie Sanders. They were contenders but not in Klitschko's class, at least not on paper, yet each of them knocked out the Ukrainian.

Klitschko had the ultimate amateur pedigree, that of an Olympic gold medalist. And he had freakish physical characteristics: tremendous size at 6-foot-6 and around 245 pounds at his best, a body that could've been sculpted by Michelangelo, tremendous punching power, good handspeed and underappreciated athleticism.

The problem, at least early on, was a questionable chin and shaky stamina. That's what Puritty, Brewster and Sanders exploited in their stunning upsets, which seemed to consign Klitschko to an unenviable club: the failed great white hypes.

Then he surprised us with the help of a new trainer.

And not just any trainer. Hall of Famer Emanuel Steward of Kronk fame took the reins in Klitschko's corner and transformed a battered, but determined young man into a force in the ring.

The seek-and-destroy Klitschko? Gone, replaced by a more clever fighter who used his height and long left jab to keep danger at bay and dominate his opponents in a way similar to Lennox Lewis, another Steward protégé and a contemporary to whom Dr. Steelhammer is most often compared.

The jab was the key that unlocked Klitschko's greatness, not only protecting him but also controlling range and setting up his powerful straight right – often the last punch

his foes would see.

Soon, Klitschko didn't just live up to his vast potential after most had given up on him; he exceeded it by arguably becoming the best heavyweight of an entire generation. The only other fighter with a legitimate claim to that distinction? Brother Vitali.

So who was better?

"Honestly, it's Wladimir," said Chris Byrd, one of four boxers to fight both men. (Puritty, Sanders and Sam Peter are the others.) Byrd was outpointed by Wladimir in 2000 and stopped by him in 2006 but he topped Vitali in 2000 when the elder Klitschko retired on his stool with a torn rotator cuff following Round 9.

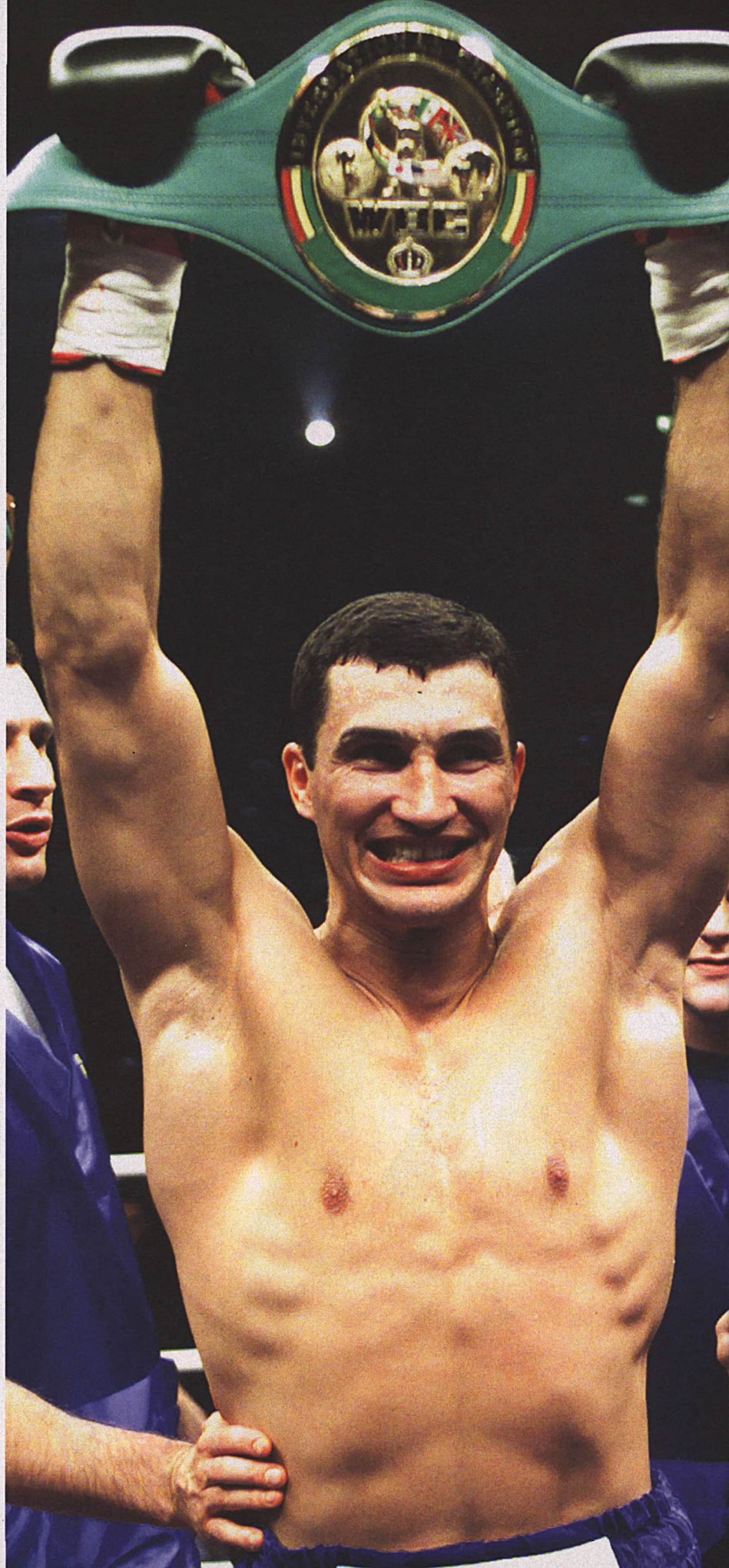
"His punching power — unreal. For me, much greater than Vitali. Vitali, I know he quit, but his toughness – he'll fight you. They both had their traits; they're similar. If they fight, it would probably come to a draw."

After Brewster stopped Wladimir in the fifth round in 2004, Klitschko went 11 years before losing again, a decision to a surprisingly lithe Tyson Fury a few months shy of his 40th birthday.

During that 11-year stretch, Klitschko won 22 consecutive times, including 19 world title fights. The closest anyone came to beating him was Peter, who put him down three times. However, this time he got up and finished the job by winning a clear decision.

No one could touch him after that, at least not until Fury.

"Right now, he's underrated (in history)," said Eric Bottjer, who was the lead matchmaker for seven of Klitschko's fights. That includes his loss to Brewster and a victory over Chris Byrd that gave him his first world title, the WBO version. "It's like the latter end of Lennox Lewis' career. Now people miss



Klitschko won a major heavyweight belt five times.

Lennox Lewis.

"(Lewis) was boring, people said. He doesn't know where he's from. People changed their opinions of him, and I bet you 10 years from now, Lewis' stock will be even higher."

Klitschko might be viewed with similar reverence when enough time has elapsed to appreciate his accomplishments, including a career-ending defeat to Anthony Joshua that only enhanced his image.

All the boring fights and nondescript decision victories were seemingly forgiven with one valiant effort against the latest future of the division, a give-and-take brawl in which both fighters went down – and got up – but Klitschko was too shaky to continue in the end.

Joshua could turn out to be the only great fighter Klitschko ever faced, which makes it difficult to determine how good he was. Even many of those who applaud his remarkable consistency acknowledge this.

Mike Tyson and Larry Holmes also fought in subpar heavyweight eras but few penalize them to the degree they do Klitschko. Bottjer believes no generation is truly as bad as the critics would have you believe.

"Guys like Sultan Ibragimov and Alex Povetkin and Sam Peter and David Haye and Chris Byrd, these guys are terrific fighters and Klitschko made them look ordinary," Bottjer said. "Klitschko could really fight.

"Guys like (Joe) Louis, (Rocky) Marciano and (Muhammad) Ali, they fought monsters for sure, but they also fought jokes."

Question Klitschko's style. Question the entertainment value of his fights. Question the level of his opposition. What can't be questioned is the manner in which he beat his opponents, most of whom took terrible beatings before the night was over. Klitschko (64-5) had 53 knockouts, an unheard-of number in an era when most elite boxers fight two, maybe three times a year.

IMPRESSIVE NUMBERS

Wladimir Klitschko compares favorably with some all-time greats (including Larry Holmes, above) in a number of statistical categories. Here are a few.

Note: Number of reigns in parentheses.

LONGEST PERIOD OF TIME AS TITLEHOLDER

Wladimir Klitschko – 13 years, 1 month (2) • **Joe Louis** – 11 years, 8 months, 8 days • **Larry Holmes** – 7 years, 3 months, 12 days • **Muhammad Ali** – 7 years, 2 months (3)

LONGEST INDIVIDUAL REIGN

Joe Louis – 11 years, 8 months, 8 days • **Wladimir Klitschko** – 9 years, 7 months, 6 days • **Larry Holmes** – 7 years, 3 months, 12 days • **Jack Dempsey** – 7 years, 2 months, 19 days • **John L. Sullivan** – 7 years, 0 months, 9 days

MOST VICTORIES IN HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE BOUTS

Joe Louis – 26
Wladimir Klitschko – 25
Muhammad Ali – 22
Larry Holmes – 21
Lennox Lewis – 15

MOST CONSECUTIVE SUCCESSFUL TITLE DEFENSES

Joe Louis – 25
Larry Holmes – 20
Wladimir Klitschko – 18
Tommy Burns – 11
Muhammad Ali – 10

Also not up for debate: the way he carried himself outside the ring. Klitschko was seen as an ambassador of the sport for more than two decades.

The only time he visited the dark side was after his loss to Brewster, when he blamed his downfall on myriad calamities, ranging from his water being poisoned to a poor leg massage in the corner. Otherwise he was all class, a complete gentleman. He didn't denigrate opponents. He didn't taunt them. His eloquence and background (Wladimir and brother Vitali both own Ph.D.s in sports science) dictated that he always shone a bright light on the sport. Oh, and he speaks four languages: English, German, Russian and Ukrainian.

This was a heavyweight champion who plays chess and kitesurfs, a real renaissance man in a crude sport. He even taught classes as an adjunct professor at Switzerland's University of St. Gallen. And he was socially conscious. He donated much of his earnings to help children in need.

Clearly, Klitschko was cut from a different cloth.

George Foreman referred to him as "the quietest man in the history of the heavyweight championship." He didn't shout from the mountaintops about how great he was. He didn't predict which round he would finish his foe. Klitschko simply took care of business ... over and over again.

He became a global star during his reign atop the heavyweight division, especially in Germany, where he resided for most of his career. He routinely played to massive crowds and generated substantial television ratings on the German network RTL.

In America, his was one of a few recognizable names in a faceless sport. He "fought" Lewis in the blockbuster film "Ocean's Eleven," though they unfortunately never squared off in real life.

Klitschko's star grew after that appearance, but he never competed in a marquee event stateside. He's partly to blame. After all, he was bemoaned as a boring, safety-first fighter who

preferred to grab and punch when he wasn't holding. Who can forget the all-time snoozer against Ibragimov?

He also never had that requisite dance partner. Only after his loss to Joshua in what can only be called a heavyweight classic did he have the proper opponent to create a tantalizing fight that would draw in America.

Joshua promoter Eddie Hearn ticketed November 11 in Las Vegas for the rematch, but that was before Klitschko did the prudent thing and announced his retirement.

No one wants to leave the sport on the heels of a loss, but this was no ordinary loss. Joshua and Klitschko gave each other hell for 10-plus rounds. The Brit dropped Klitschko hard in Round 5. He rallied the next round and seemed to have Joshua out on his feet after a particularly hard knockdown. Back and forth they went, until finally Joshua forced his foe to the canvas twice and for the final time of Klitschko's storied career.

It wasn't just a changing-of-the-guard bout. It was the fight Klitschko needed to show just how much fight he had inside him all along.

"People forget when he was young the way he used to fight," Bottjer said. "After the Joshua fight people said, 'That's the best I've ever seen Klitschko look.' That guy was a monster in the '90s. That guy punched in combo, he was fast, he had good footwork and he could hit like a truck.

"He showed glimpses of that in the Joshua bout, but he was throwing 20 punchers per round and he was 41 years old."

So just how will Klitschko be remembered when it's all said and done? As a great heavyweight? By many, yes. But as a top-10 heavyweight all-time? Not according to Hall of Fame matchmaker Don Chargin, who would rank Wlad no higher than the 11-to-15 range.

"Wladimir was a little

HOW DOES WLAD RATE?

Experts universally agree that the now-retired Wladimir Klitschko was among the best heavyweights in recent years. THE RING wanted to know more specifically where he stands in relation to his rivals. Thus, we polled 10 of our experts to determine the 10 best big men of the past 30 years (beginning in 1987). We used the scoring system we use for our annual Best Fighter Poll. The fighters received points for each vote they got: 15 for a first-place vote, 12 for second, nine for third, seven for fourth, six for fifth, five for sixth, four for seventh, three for eighth, two for ninth and one for 10th. Here are the results.

FINAL POLL RESULTS

1. LENNOX LEWIS.....135 (5)
2. E. HOLYFIELD.....129 (5)
3. MIKE TYSON.....78
4. WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO..73
5. VITALI KLITSCHKO.....62
6. RIDDICK BOWE.....60
7. GEORGE FOREMAN.....26
8. MICHAEL MOORER.....25
9T. IKE IBEABUCHI.....14
9T. CHRIS BYRD.....14

OTHERS RECEIVING VOTES: RAY MERCER 6, JOHN RUIZ 6, BUSTER DOUGLAS 5, TIM WITHERSPOON 3, DAVID TUA 3, TOMMY MORRISON 1. • First-place votes are in parentheses.

INDIVIDUAL TOP 10s

RON BORGES
1. Evander Holyfield
2. Lennox Lewis
3. Mike Tyson
4. Wladimir Klitschko
5. Riddick Bowe
6. George Foreman
7. Vitali Klitschko
8. Tim Witherspoon
9. Chris Byrd
10. Ike Ibeabuchi

DOUG FISCHER
1. Evander Holyfield
2. Lennox Lewis
3. Mike Tyson
4. Wladimir Klitschko
5. Riddick Bowe
6. Vitali Klitschko
7. Ray Mercer
8. George Foreman
9. Michael Moorer
10. Tommy Morrison

NORM FRAUENHEIM
1. Evander Holyfield
2. Lennox Lewis
3. Vitali Klitschko
4. Mike Tyson
5. Wladimir Klitschko
6. George Foreman
7. Riddick Bowe
8. Ike Ibeabuchi
9. Buster Douglas
10. Michael Moorer

TOM GERBASI
1. Lennox Lewis
2. Evander Holyfield
3. Wladimir Klitschko
4. Mike Tyson
5. Riddick Bowe
6. Vitali Klitschko
7. Michael Moorer
8. John Ruiz
9. Chris Byrd
10. George Foreman

TOM GRAY
1. Lennox Lewis
2. Evander Holyfield
3. Mike Tyson
4. Wladimir Klitschko
5. Vitali Klitschko
6. Riddick Bowe
7. Michael Moorer
8. Ike Ibeabuchi
9. Chris Byrd
10. David Tua

BRIAN HARTY
1. Evander Holyfield
2. Lennox Lewis
3. Mike Tyson
4. Riddick Bowe
5. Vitali Klitschko
6. George Foreman
7. Wladimir Klitschko
8. Ike Ibeabuchi
9. Michael Moorer
10. Chris Byrd

MARTIN MULCAHEY
1. Lennox Lewis
2. Wladimir Klitschko
3. Vitali Klitschko
4. Riddick Bowe
5. Evander Holyfield
6. Mike Tyson
7. Ike Ibeabuchi
8. Chris Byrd
9. John Ruiz
10. Michael Moorer

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL
1. Evander Holyfield
2. Lennox Lewis
3. Riddick Bowe
4. Mike Tyson
5. Vitali Klitschko
6. Wladimir Klitschko
7. Michael Moorer
8. George Foreman
9. Chris Byrd
10. Ray Mercer

RYAN SONGALIA
1. Lennox Lewis
2. Evander Holyfield
3. Wladimir Klitschko
4. Mike Tyson
5. Vitali Klitschko
6. Riddick Bowe
7. George Foreman
8. Michael Moorer
9. Chris Byrd
10. Ray Mercer

ANSON WAINWRIGHT
1. Lennox Lewis
2. Evander Holyfield
3. Mike Tyson
4. Wladimir Klitschko
5. Vitali Klitschko
6. Riddick Bowe
7. Michael Moorer
8. Buster Douglas
9. David Tua
10. John Ruiz

Klitschko almost pulled off a historic victory over Anthony Joshua but came up short.

mechanical," said Chargin, who at 89 years old possesses the institutional knowledge most observers lack when ranking heavyweight greats. After all, he was alive to see them all, from Louis to Ali to Marciano.

Others believe time is needed to truly appreciate what we had in Klitschko. He wasn't always the most exciting fighter, but boxing is better for having had him as a central figure in the sport for so long.

"It's hard to reign like that, it's hard to be champion and everybody's chasing you but you're knocking them down one by one like it's nothing," Byrd said. "You're just running the whole table. People need to give him his props. He was that good.

"He's 6-6, 245 pounds, with talent, can punch like a mule kick, awesome jab, can fight. We need to give him credit. He got stopped by Lamon, he got stopped by Corrie. That we saw. We didn't see him with Puritty, that was early (in his career and not on TV in the U.S.). And now he can't fight? People lose. He got stopped. Oh well.

"He came back and redeemed himself every time. That's the true mark of a champion. To get knocked out and come back and do that much better? He's one of the greatest heavyweights of all time, but no one will ever say it. They won't give him his credit. He can't fight? Well, then get in the ring with him."

After the Fury setback, people wanted Klitschko out of their lives as quickly as possible. He changed that perception against Joshua, and just maybe that will be his lasting legacy – as a fighter who refused to give up in the face of the most daunting odds. RING

THE NEMESIS

JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ WILL ALWAYS BE LINKED TO ARCHRIVAL MANNY PACQUIAO

By **Don Stradley**

Despite the probable objections from fighters like Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales and Canelo Alvarez, there's a very good argument to be made that Juan Manuel Marquez was the best fighter to come out of Mexico in the years since Julio Cesar Chavez. And Marquez's recent retirement from the business, at a time when an increasing number of participants from places other than Mexico are proving to be more than adequate, feels bittersweet. Whether or not Marquez was the best, his exit marks the end of Mexican boxing's post-Chavez generation.

Marquez was a fight fan's fighter, a canny technician who saw openings where other fighters saw only doom. The numbers he amassed were more than respectable, including

ERIC JAMISON/INSET: JEFF MORGAN

Juan Manuel Marquez's one-punch knockout of Manny Pacquiao was his defining victory but he had already demonstrated his greatness by then.

Above: Marquez was the first to stop slick Cuban Joel Casamayor (above right). Right: Marquez was able to lure rival Marco Antonio Barrera (left) into the ring only once and never fought Erik Morales.

JAE C HONG; (RIGHT) ERIC JAMISON

a record of 56-7-1 (40 knockouts), titles in four weight classes and eight pay-per-view events that earned a combined 5 million buys. But the stats do a poor job of telling his story, for Marquez's career featured as dramatic a change as any we'd ever seen in the history of the business. Saddled early with the reputation of being an overly cautious boxer who fought from the brain rather than the gut, he evolved into a kind of thinking man's brawler. The second act of Marquez's career often saw him rising from the canvas, bloodied, mounting one stirring victory after another. He had become must-see TV, which no one would've predicted for him.

"At the beginning, there was no sense of greatness," said John Beyrooty, publicist at the Forum in Inglewood, California, where Marquez fought many times early in his career. "I always thought he'd be good, but I didn't think he'd be an all-time great."

Marquez had lost his first professional bout on a foul and then scuffled around Mexico City rings for a year and a half before coming north in the mid-1990s. Beyrooty recalled for THE RING a "humble, amicable" young featherweight who "spoke very little English and kept to himself. He was popular enough, but at the time there were only a couple of Mexicans who could really draw, like Jorge Paez because of his antics. Juan wasn't spectacular, but he was smart and he worked hard."

Marquez's first real title shot came in 1999 when he challenged Freddie Norwood for the WBA featherweight belt. In what became the theme of Marquez's career, he lost by what many saw as an unjust decision. The effect was the same as if he'd been knocked out. He spent the next few years in a sort of wilderness, making stops in such unglamorous locales as Worley, Idaho, and West Wendover, Nevada, winning fights but failing to excite. In 2004 he came to Las Vegas to face boxing's new sensation, a tiger from the Philippines named Manny Pacquiao. This was the turning point. We'd never again look at Marquez as just a careful counterpuncher.

Shockingly, Marquez was dropped three times in the first round. Referee Joe Cortez would have been within his rights to give Marquez a hug and send him to the showers, but Cortez let the fight continue. By the fourth, with

blood pouring from his nose, Marquez had figured out Pacquiao's style and was countering effectively. When the 12th round ended, both fighters looked like hell. Some ringsiders felt that Marquez had done enough to win, but it went into the record books as a split draw. The verdict left Marquez disgruntled, but as former HBO commentator Larry Merchant suggested recently, the fight changed Marquez's career in myriad ways.

"Don't forget," Merchant told THE RING, "for their first two fights, Pacquiao was actually more popular (than Marquez) among Mexicans because of his style. ... Marquez wasn't a crowd-pleasing fighter. That was his reputation. Unlike most of the Mexicans who were building fanbases by being warriors, Marquez was a pure boxer, sidestepping the system as an outsider.

"Marquez always seemed mature and stable, not mercurial as a lot of fighters are; his personality may have played a part in his style, as much as 'Nacho' Beristain's coaching. Eventually, as boxers do, he slowed up a little and become more aggressive. There are some boxers who, whether it's out of economic necessity or through their own evolution, become more entertaining as they mature. He's a perfect example. And it may have been Pacquiao who prompted that change in him."

Marquez would face Pacquiao three more times in the coming years, finishing the series with a blood-curdling knockout of his old rival in 2012. But that crushing KO was the climax of a story that began back in 2004. It was in that first tango with Pacquiao that Marquez showed the qualities of a great fighter, surviving a disastrous first round and blowing away the doubts we may have had about him.

Yet even with this new, favorable image, Marquez retained something of his early career's hard luck. After the draw, he made the unexpected decision to fight Indonesia's Chris John. He lost. In 2009 he jumped up to welterweight

CLETO
REYES
PACQUIAO

to face Floyd Mayweather Jr. He lost again, badly. By then it had become fashionable to prefer Marquez's charismatic younger brother, Rafael. And it didn't help Marquez's persona when he revealed his habit of drinking his own urine or when he hired Angel Hernandez, a strength coach known for giving athletes illegal PEDs.

The longest-running story about Marquez was how he seemed to be in the shadow of other Mexican stars, namely Barrera and Morales. Though it filled column inches, the story may not have been as hot as it was made out to be.

"That was something for the press to talk about," said Beyrooty. "I don't know how much of an ego he had, as far as that went. I never heard him talk about it."

Merchant concurred: "He wasn't the sort who wore his Mexican background on his sleeve. Some fighters talk nonstop about their background. If you didn't know Marquez was Mexican, you wouldn't think he was."

Meanwhile, Pacquiao and Marquez kept showing up in each other's lives like bad pennies. It was against Pacquiao that Marquez's cool concentration was best showcased. In fact, what had made Pacquiao so effective in his career – his energy, his endless flow of punches – seemed to backfire against Marquez, leaving him off balance and vulnerable. Conversely, what had made Marquez a hard sell – his reserve, his patience – worked wonders against Pacquiao. As the saying goes: Styles make fights. Pacquiao won squeakers in 2008 and 2011, fairly to some, but many felt Marquez should've been given those decisions.

"I thought Pacquiao deserved the nods," Merchant said. "They were obviously close fights. As for the knockout punch heard 'round the world, I think the circumstances were that Pacquiao was being scrutinized because he hadn't scored a knockout in a long time, and he was trying to get it. He was taking chances. I don't think it was a lucky shot. I give Marquez full credit, because he was hurt and the other guy was coming after him."

The blow that took eight years and 42 rounds to land earned Marquez recognition as THE RING's Fighter of the Year in 2012. He was only the fourth Mexican fighter to win the honor, along with Chavez, Salvador Sanchez and Carlos Zarate. Pacquiao-Marquez IV was also Fight of the Year and Knockout of the Year.

It will be interesting to see how Marquez will be treated by history. At times, he seemed to be no more than a distressing sidenote in the Pacquiao story, the way Ken Norton had been for Muhammad Ali. Even if Marquez had his number, it was Pacquiao, by way of his personality and style, who dominated our thoughts. Indeed, even after being flattened by Marquez in 2012, Pacquiao still took part in an ultra-lucrative event with Mayweather, while Marquez remained at the margins. History isn't polite, and it's not always logical. Gene Tunney beat Jack Dempsey twice, but no one rates Tunney above Dempsey. Chances are we'll remember Pacquiao, not Marquez, as the greater figure. Of course, knocking Pacquiao cold in their final meeting will give plenty of ammo to Marquez's supporters. It was, as Marquez has said, "karma for the robberies."

Though riddled with potholes and detours, Marquez's long boxing journey will undoubtedly reach its end at the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York. That's a long way from the Philippines, but Pacquiao should fly in for the weekend to induct him. Then again, no one would blame Marquez if he didn't want to share the dais with the guy. Sharing 42 rounds was more than enough.

Marquez's series with Manny Pacquiao was competitive because he counterpunched so effectively, including in their fateful final meeting.

THE OTHER OPPONENTS

Marquez will be remembered primarily for his four-fight series with a certain Filipino politician, but he defeated many other fine fighters. Here are five.

MANUEL MEDINA

Date/site: Feb. 1, 2003, Las Vegas
Result: Marquez KO 7
Details: Marquez dominated the crafty veteran Medina, flooring him twice and winning the vacant IBF featherweight title.

MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA

Date/site: March 17, 2007, Las Vegas
Result: Marquez UD
Details: This long-awaited contest saw Marquez win on points, earning the WBC junior lightweight title in the process.

JOEL CASAMAYOR

Date/site: Sept. 13, 2008, Las Vegas
Result: Marquez KO 11
Details: Marquez dropped the cunning Cuban twice en route to an 11th-round stoppage win, claiming recognition as RING lightweight champion.

JUAN DIAZ

Date/site: Feb. 28, 2009, Houston
Result: Marquez KO 9
Details: A vicious right uppercut from Marquez put an end to Diaz's night at 2:40 of the ninth. THE RING chose this as Fight of the Year.

MICHAEL KATSIDIS

Date/site: Nov. 27, 2010, Las Vegas
Result: Marquez KO 9
Details: Marquez survived a third-round knockdown and outboxed the younger man until the bout was finally stopped at 2:14 of the ninth.

BITTERSWEET

SUGAR SHANE MOSLEY WANTED TO EXTEND HIS REMARKABLE CAREER BUT HIS BODY SAID 'NO'

By **Norm Frauenheim**

The taste, like the nickname, is still there. Sugar Shane Mosley still loves the Sweet Science, but the body betrayed him. It proved to be a lot more fragile than the enduring passion that kept him in harm's way for so long.

No matter how hard Mosley tried – and he tried twice – he couldn't stay away from one more trip through those ropes and into the peril any more than a kid with a sweet tooth can resist one more reach into the candy jar.

Mosley retired once before but the appetite would not subside. He came back. He retired again. Yet he stayed close enough to the sounds, smells and routines that inevitably reawakened the old desire, one of the few things he could never knock out. Again, he was back for more.

But chins, hands, knees, shoulders, teeth and much, much more are a lot more vulnerable to the accumulated damage of repeated punches than a willingness to fight on is.

Mosley had initiated those punches. Countered them, too. He had eluded them, then took them and finally endured them for nearly a quarter century. In boxing years, that's at least a couple of lifetimes.

"What happened was my arm is breaking down," said Mosley, who on August 16 announced a retirement that had a tone of finality to it. "So are my knees, my shoulders. My back is breaking down. My body is telling me I'm older. I can't do it like I used to, at least not at 100 percent. I can't

Mosley was athletic and skillful but always had the demeanor of a warrior.

Trainer Naazim Richardson (right) did his best to teach an old dog new tricks.

see myself in the ring again. I'd have to say I'm retired."

But that doesn't mean he was happy about it. Mosley, whose resilience bubbled to the surface in the twilight of his career against Antonio Margarito and Fernando Vargas, was looking forward to more bouts, even with all the aches and pains common to any middle-aged man. Mosley, who turned 46 on Sept. 7, foresaw a career that would last a few more years.

"I had more left," he said. "I was looking at a few big fights in 2017 and 2018. I mean, Bernard Hopkins fought at the world-class level until he was 50. He's a friend and a role model."

But Mosley says fate intervened. Actually, an elbow did. Mosley said he underwent surgery a few months ago to have bone fragments removed from his right elbow. The procedure went awry, he said.

"The surgery turned into a whole ordeal after the surgeon admittedly 'accidentally' burned me on my forearm," Mosley said. "That led to an infection. I had like four or five days of antibiotics through an IV and then two weeks of antibiotics at home. It was crazy. Really, it was surreal to hear I could never fight again."

Mosley said his right arm – the same one that delivered one of the game's most lethal punches – no longer straightens out to its full distance. He also said he continues to suffer from numbness in his right fingers.

"I've been going to physical therapy, but nothing helped, so I know this is the time to announce my retirement," Mosley said about 15 months after his last bout, a unanimous decision loss to David Avanesyan on May 28, 2016, in Glendale, Arizona.

The prior comebacks are reasons to wonder whether he'll try to come back once again, even in the wake of the problematic elbow surgery.

Born fighters never quit, and Mosley never did throughout a career that started in 1993 and was at its peak two decades ago, when there wasn't a better lightweight on the planet.

Mosley (49-10-1, 41 knockouts) was so good at 135 pounds that there was speculation about how he would do against prior legends. Another century was approaching and Mosley looked as if he could be the face of boxing's new millennium.

The then-25-year-old from Pomona, California, won the IBF version of the title with a unanimous decision over Phillip Holiday on August 2, 1997, at the Mohegan Sun Casino in Uncasville, Connecticut.

It launched him on what proved to be an astonishing run: eight successive stoppages in eight straight title defenses from November 1997 through April 1999. Mosley was as sensational as he was busy. It looked a lot like the beginning of a special legacy.

"He's the best lightweight in history, maybe after Roberto Duran," Roy Jones Jr. said in his role as HBO analyst after Mosley knocked out John John Molina on May 9, 1998, in Atlantic City.

That historical parallel was never really tested, however. A year and five stoppages later, Mosley was out of the lightweight division, looking for bigger challenges, bigger names and much bigger money. In THE RING's millennial look back at the game, it ranked history's greatest lightweights. Mosley came in at No. 13 on a list topped by Duran, with Pernell Whitaker at No. 3.

But the prize in fighting isn't about rankings. By definition, it's about opportunity and money. Mosley pursued both, skipping junior welterweight altogether, a decision that in hindsight looks like a mistake. His unique blend of power and speed appeared to be a perfect fit for his 5-foot-8½ body.

Still, there was enough of both to make Mosley a very good welterweight – good enough, in fact, to beat Oscar De La Hoya in a couple of contentious bouts, first by split decision at Staples Center in Los Angeles in 2000 at 147 pounds and again by unanimous decision at Las Vegas' MGM Grand at 154. De La Hoya had it all, and beating him was a way to gain some notice. In beating him twice, however, Mosley fought his way into a share of that celebrity spotlight.

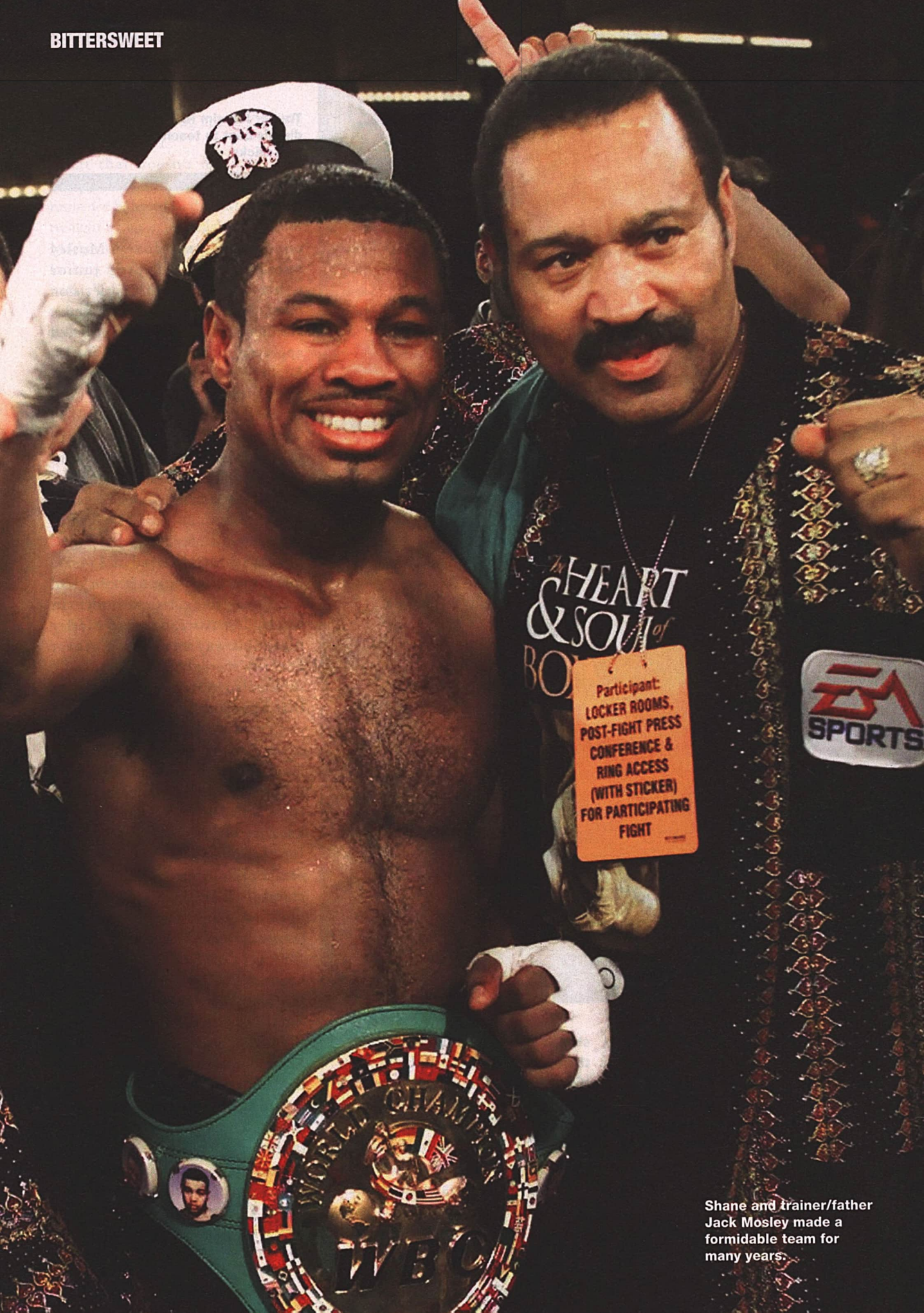
"I am so grateful Oscar gave me that opportunity to showcase my skills on a worldwide level," Mosley said. "People could see who 'Sugar' Shane really was. When I fought Oscar, it really put me on the world stage and I kept on winning and knocking people out."

No doubt about that. Fans and media alike began to refer to him simply as Sugar Shane instead of Mosley. He was becoming a household name.

Between the De La Hoya matches, however, a couple of things happened that today serve as warning signs of a career about to get sidetracked.

There was Vernon Forrest, who for Mosley became a harsh reminder in the familiar lesson about how styles dictate fights, if not fate.

Forrest beat Mosley as an amateur, taking a spot on the 1992 U.S. Olympic team that Mosley had long pursued. As pros, however, it had begun to look as if Mosley's star had surpassed that of Forrest. But Forrest's jab, straight right hand and



Shane and trainer/father Jack Mosley made a formidable team for many years.

timing trumped Mosley's handspeed and power.

From the amateur ranks to the pros, the result was the same. Forrest beat him twice in back-to-back bouts, both by unanimous decision, first at New York's Madison Square Garden in January 2002 and again in Indianapolis that July.

Within seven months, Mosley had gone from unbeaten to twice-beaten. It might have been a good time to hit the reset button and move down in weight, to the 140 Mosley had skipped. But again, the prize – the real money – was still at 147 and even at 154 in bouts against Ricardo Mayorga, Margarito, Vargas and Floyd Mayweather Jr.

In the aftermath of the Forrest losses, the rematch victory over De La Hoya was a sign that Mosley's career was back on track. But then there was controversy and Winky Wright.

In 2003, Mosley's name appeared on a BALCO client list. BALCO, of course, meant Barry Bonds, Marion Jones and PEDs. Mosley never tested positive. According to grand jury transcripts, however, Mosley testified in 2003 that he injected himself with EPO, a banned substance, while in training for his rematch with De La Hoya, a fight he won by a controversial decision.

Then, there were conflicting stories about what Mosley did and didn't know. Repeatedly, he said he didn't know "what the hell he was taking." However, he conceded there was something more than fruit and fish on the training menu.

In an era when the PED controversy turned every athlete in almost every sport into a suspect, the story affected the way the public viewed Mosley. Sugar took on a different, cynical meaning.

The hit to Mosley's reputation also coincided with further damage to his record. As with Forrest in 2002, he lost back-to-back fights in 2004 to Wright, first by unanimous decision in March and again that November by majority decision, both in Las Vegas.

If the Forrest losses were about style, the losses to Wright were a reminder about why there are weight classes. Wright was simply bigger. A year and a half later, Wright went on to fight Jermain Taylor, a unified middleweight champion, to a draw.

Nevertheless, back-to-back losses to just about anybody create widespread doubt and talk about how retirement might be approaching. As always, however, Mosley did what he has always done: He fought on.

The fight to restore his rep got a big boost with back-to-back stoppages of Vargas in 2006. Then there was a memorable TKO of Margarito in a 2009 bout preceded by scandal; a foreign substance had been discovered in Margarito's hand wraps by Mosley trainer Naazim Richardson before the opening bell.

In hindsight, the bout was the beginning of the end of Margarito's best days. It also might have been Mosley's last moment at a career peak, one of many on his up-and-down resume.

Still, he reminded us in a flash just how good he had been.

On May 1, 2010, it looked as if he would pull off what nobody ever had. He had Mayweather in trouble. With two minutes left in the second round, Mosley rocked his opponent with a right hand.

A stunned Mayweather grabbed onto Mosley. If he hadn't, he might've wound up with a seat on the canvas. About 45 seconds later, Mosley landed another right that knocked Mayweather off balance and sent him stumbling across the canvas like a kid falling off a bicycle.

Somehow, Mayweather survived and went on to win a one-sided decision. Somehow, Mosley didn't finish him in a way that he probably would have earlier in his career.

Nevertheless, it was a snapshot of who he once was and why he'll probably be a first-ballot Hall of Famer. RING

Mosley couldn't get past the younger, fresher Canelo Alvarez.

TWO CAREERS IN ONE

Shane Mosley was untouchable during the first eight years of his career – mostly as a lightweight – but was essentially a .500 fighter over the final 15. Here is a look at the first and second portions of his career.

FIRST

Record: 38-0 (35 KOs)
Biggest accomplishments: Won the IBF lightweight title in 1997 and successfully defended eight times before moving up to welterweight. Outpointed Oscar De La Hoya to win the WBC 147-pound title – his biggest victory – and successfully defended three times. Also beat Phillip Holiday (to win the 135-pound title), Demetrio Ceballos, John John Molina and Jesse James Leija.
Biggest setbacks: None.

SECOND

Record: 11-10-1 (6 KOs)
Biggest accomplishments: Defeated De La Hoya by a controversial decision in their rematch, stopped Fernando Vargas twice and KO'd a hot version of Antonio Margarito in 2009 in his last great performance.
Biggest losses: Was unbeaten until he lost back-to-back decisions against Vernon Forrest and was never really the same. Also lost back-to-back nods against Winky Wright, was outpointed by Miguel Cotto and came up short in big-money fights against Floyd Mayweather Jr., Manny Pacquiao and Canelo Alvarez.

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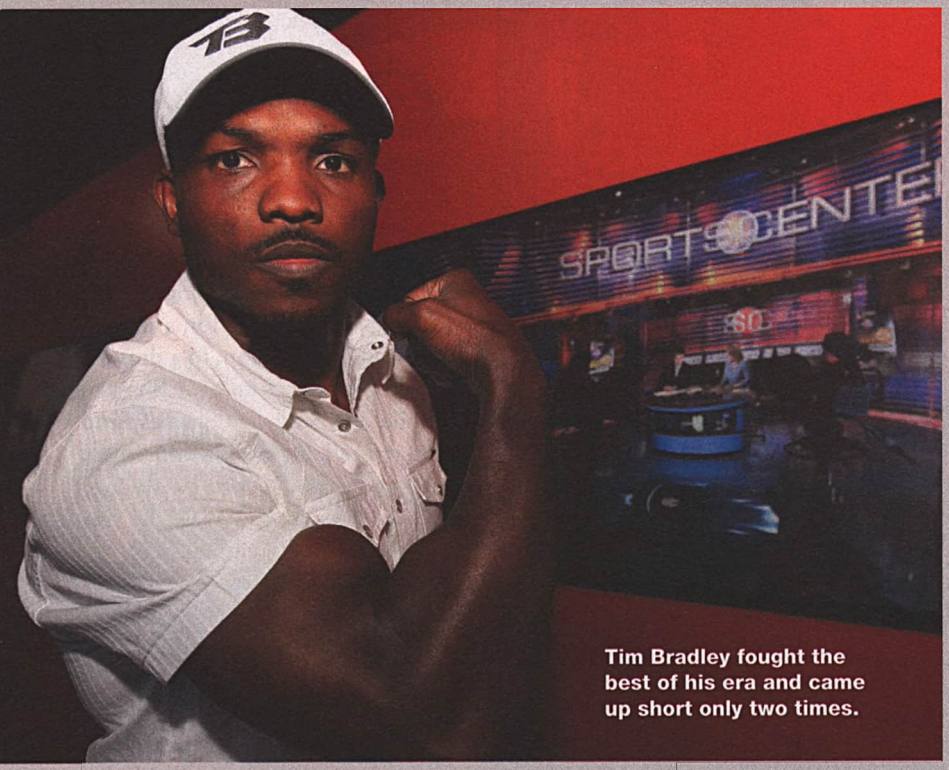


Tim Bradley fought the best of his era and came up short only two times.

A MAN ON THE MOVE

TIM BRADLEY IS CONTENT TO SHIFT FROM FIGHTING TO COMMENTARY

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Tim Bradley had just completed another card as a television analyst for ESPN and was walking briskly to his hotel in downtown Los Angeles. A few reporters trailed him, asking questions. And he was happy to oblige them, obviously comfortable in his new role of communicating with his voice rather than his fists.

The five-time titleholder in two divisions had announced his retirement on the broadcast.

"I'm happy, I'm content," he said when asked about his decision. "I'm not doubting my reasoning at all. My daughter here, my kids at home, I've had time to spend with them over the course of a few months. They're the most important things to me.

"Longevity, longevity. I'm retiring on my own terms, not taking any more of the damaging effects of boxing. I want to continue to be a part of boxing, but from the outside."

Bradley (33-2-1, 13 knockouts) has reason to be content.

The poor kid from the Southern California desert was blessed with a Mike Tyson-like body and the work ethic to maintain it, as well as exceptional boxing skills and concrete belief in himself. And he put these assets to good use over a 16-year career.

Few fighters of his era faced and defeated as many elite opponents as he did. Among his victims: Manny Pacquiao (disputed), Juan Manuel Marquez, Ruslan Provodnikov, Devon Alexander, Lamont Peterson, Junior Witter, Miguel Vazquez. And there were more.

Bradley's three-fight series with Pacquiao will define him to a great extent – for good, bad and worse.

He won a split decision in their first meeting, in June 2012, but the scoring was derided as one of the greatest injustices in recent years. Most fans chalked it up to an ongoing problem with hit-and-miss judging. Some went nuts, criticizing Bradley mercilessly as if he bore some blame. A few lunatics went so far as to threaten his life.

His greatest victory was minimized and he was attacked personally. It's no wonder that the episode left Bradley badly shaken.

He responded by going toe-to-toe with the brawler Provodnikov in his next fight, as if he were kicking the asses of every fan who went after him. The brutal, give-and-take fight probably shortened his career.

Bradley would go on to beat Marquez, Jessie Vargas and Brandon Rios before losing to Pacquiao in what would be his final fight.

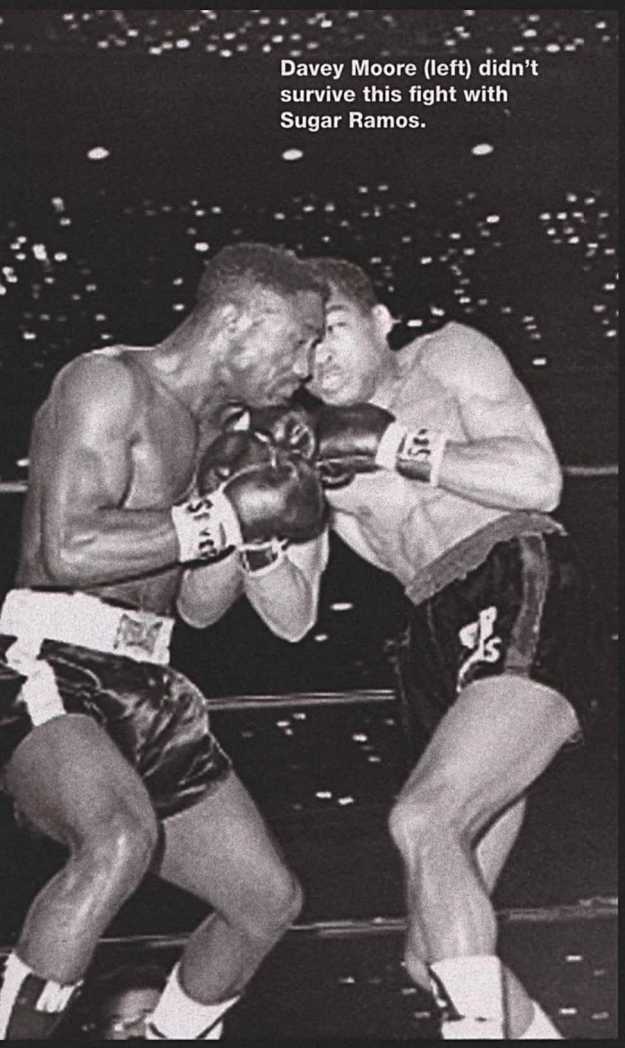
He's only 34. He demonstrated in the third fight with Pacquiao that he can still handle himself. He simply decided enough was enough. His legacy is set. His faculties are intact. And he has a future in broadcasting, which will keep the money rolling in.

Some believe he will end up in the Hall of Fame.

"Some?" he said. "I don't know who 'some' is. Look at my resume. It's better than some of the guys on the pound-for-pound list. ... I'm a five-time world champion. I fought the best, I never shied away from a fight. I fought Pacquiao three times, I fought Marquez. I fought Alexander when he was on top.

"And only one time did I fight for a vacant championship. I took the other (four titles) from the champions. How many people can say that? Not a lot." RING

TINGED LEGACY



Davey Moore (left) didn't survive this fight with Sugar Ramos.

SUGAR RAMOS BUILT A HALL OF FAME RESUME BUT WILL BE REMEMBERED PRIMARILY FOR A TRAGEDY

By **Tom Gray**

One of the most dreaded experiences a prizefighter can encounter is a ring fatality caused by his own fists. Sadly, former undisputed featherweight champion Ultiminio "Sugar" Ramos, who died at 75 on September 3 following a long battle with cancer, is likely to be remembered for exactly that.

On March 21, 1963, Ramos claimed the RING, WBA and WBC 126-pound titles by stopping champion Davey Moore in the 10th round of an excellent fight held at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles.

Moore appeared to be fine afterward but quickly became ill and collapsed in his dressing room. During the final round, the 29-year-old American had been floored and, unbeknownst to onlookers, sustained an injury to his brainstem when his neck struck the bottom rope.

The bout was stopped shortly thereafter but the damage had been done. Ramos had achieved a lifelong dream, but the man he dethroned died just two days later.

Only 21 years old at the time, Ramos was crestfallen and never truly recovered.

It wasn't the first time he had experienced such pain. In November 1958, in Havana, a Cuban journeyman named Jose Blanco had died from injuries sustained in a bout with Ramos. Moore's death, however, was different. It was a high-profile fight seen worldwide and, as a result, the press hounded the Cuban boxer-puncher mercilessly.

"For me, Sugar Ramos has got to be in the Top 10 best featherweights of all time," said Hall of Fame matchmaker and promoter Don Chargin. "He was a good puncher, he was smart and I had nothing but respect for him.

"But the Davey Moore fight definitely affected his career. We were both inducted into the (International Boxing) Hall of Fame in 2001. He told me that people would only bring up the fight once in a while but that it was still too much for him. He just said, 'What can you do?'"

The death of Moore didn't completely define Ramos' career. He escaped the Fidel Castro regime and its anti-boxing laws in 1961 and relocated to Mexico. He would become a boxing hero in his adopted homeland and take part in classic encounters in the featherweight and lightweight divisions.

Following three successful defenses of the featherweight title, Ramos was stopped by the great Mexican Vicente Saldivar in 12 rounds in 1964, and two defeats at the hands of future Hall of Famer Carlos Ortiz in 1966 and 1967 put an end to his lightweight aspirations. Ramos would never fight for a world title again.

By that time, though, his legacy was already secure. Ramos (55-7-4, 40 knockouts) retired in 1972.

"In 66 years of promoting, the greatest fight that I ever put on was Sugar Ramos against Mando Ramos," Chargin said. "They fought a 10-rounder for me at the Olympic (Auditorium in Los Angeles) where the capacity was 10,400. We had over 14,000 people in there. The fans were everywhere and it's a fight that I'll never forget.

"'Sugar' wasn't big enough for lightweight at 5-foot-4 and he'd seen better days. He'd had a lot of tough fights by then and the tragedy with Davey Moore, who people should also remember as a super champion."

Both warriors are now at peace.

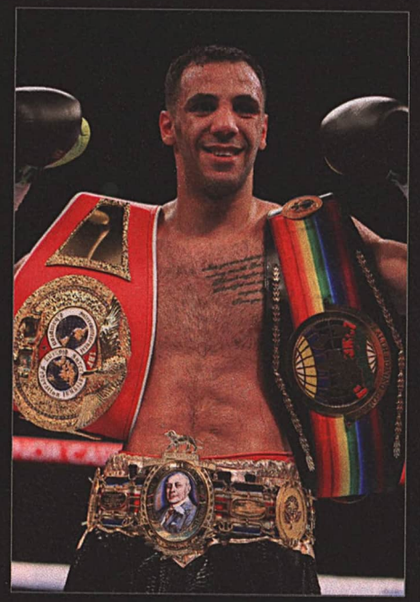
Tom Gray is a U.K. Correspondent/Editor for RingTV.com and a member of THE RING ratings panel. Follow him on Twitter: @Tom_Gray_Boxing

Kal Yafai might be the most skillful boxer in the United Kingdom.

NEXT GENERATION ROYALTY

KAL YAFAI DOESN'T HAVE PRINCE NASEEM HAMED'S FLAMBOYANCE BUT HE MIGHT BE AS GOOD

By **Tom Gray**



When one thinks of former unified featherweight champion Prince Naseem Hamed, the tendency is to recall the flamboyant and the outrageous. The extraordinary confidence, the extravagant ring walks, the signature front-flip over the top rope and, when the bell rang, prodigious punching power.

What is often ignored is the enormous influence Hamed, a Brit of Yemeni descent, had on a younger generation that grew up marveling at both his audacity and his talent.

Khalid Yafai, who also has a Yemeni background, was one of those kids.

"Naz was every Yemeni's hero," recalled Yafai, who is commonly known as Kal. "He was on all the Arabic channels and he started fighting on Sky Sports (U.K. channel) when I was growing up. I was probably about 7 or 8 years old. We would beg our mum to order the boxing (on pay-per-view) but she knew we'd fall asleep, and that's what happened in most cases. We'd watch it on repeat the next morning but Mum would always pay for it. We watched Naz all the time."

As it turned out, those late-night fistic adventures with "The Prince" were just the start of a special journey. Yafai, a 28-year-old resident of Birmingham, is now the WBA junior bantamweight titleholder and one of the most technically gifted fighters in the U.K. And, fortunately for him, he resides in one of the hottest divisions

Yafai nearly shut out Suguru Muranaka to retain his junior bantamweight title in his most recent fight.

ALEXANDER SAMIDOSS/AP

in the sport.

As an amateur, Yafai won a reported 152 of 175 bouts and represented Great Britain at the Beijing Olympics in 2008. He turned professional in July 2012 to considerable acclaim and, so far, things have gone smoothly.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Yafai's ancestral home, which in sharp contrast is the stuff of nightmares. Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the world. It has been stricken by military conflict, famine and cholera, leaving almost 20 million people in dire need of humanitarian aid.

"It's not good to see the homeland, the way things have turned out," Yafai said after a thoughtful pause. "My mum was brought up in Yemen. And even when my grandmother passed away last year, there was no way my granddad could go back. He's got houses over there and I have uncles and other family members who live there too. It's like hell on earth right now. It's unsafe and all we can do is donate to as many charities as we can.

"My mum came over to the U.K. when she was around 14 years old. She lived in Wales originally, because my grandparents came to Cardiff first. My granddad worked in the mines and on the docks in Cardiff. My mum was raised there. Then she came to Birmingham and that's where she met my dad. They got married and I was their first child."

Kal wasn't the last. He has four brothers and two sisters. Gamal, an unbeaten junior featherweight, is already Commonwealth champion and on the rise. Galal was competing in the World Amateur Championships in Hamburg, Germany, at the time of this writing. Mikyle is only 7 years old, but a very proud Yafai is convinced that boxing is his destiny. It truly is becoming a family affair.

The comfort of family is reflected in Yafai's personality. He has a warm, genuine and almost wholesome demeanor. Underneath that, however, is the self-confidence one would associate with a successful prizefighter. Extravagant ring walks or acrobatics aren't for him, but he certainly carries Hamed's self-belief.

Yafai and his head trainer, Max McCracken, were coached by Frank O'Sullivan at Birmingham City Boxing Club, as were McCracken's brothers, Robert and Spence. All three boxed professionally. Robert, probably best known for training Carl Froch and Anthony Joshua, was a capable middleweight/junior middleweight who won British and Commonwealth titles before falling short against then-WBC 160-pound titleholder Keith Holmes.

It is Max, however, who has guided Yafai's professional ascent, and he believes that his fighter has the potential to do great things.

"Kal is improving all the time; he's good technically and he's got a great boxing brain," McCracken said. "He's coming on in each fight and gaining plenty of experience. He's defensively sound and cute in the ring and you rarely see his head getting knocked back by punches. Kal is always switched on to what's coming back after he's put his shots together.

"He's a unique kid and you won't get many like him. Kal is a great role model and he doesn't mess about. He's always in the house at the weekend with his girlfriend, resting after a hard week in the gym. Very rarely is he out and he just lives and breathes boxing. He always wants to learn and do new things. He's got a brilliant attitude."

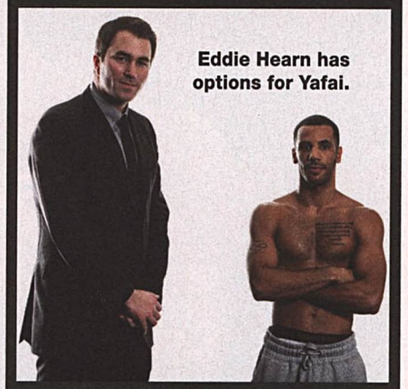
Eddie Hearn, managing director of Matchroom Boxing, was also drawn to Yafai's personality. After making the decision to turn professional, Yafai jumped in his car and drove approximately 150 miles to the promoter's state-of-the-art headquarters in Essex. He arrived alone and the pair thrashed out a deal that would lead him to a world championship after just 20 paid outings.

"I'd met Kal at the Team GB training base in Sheffield a couple of times and he had a really good way about him," Hearn said. "He was full of energy, he had a great smile and he could really fight. I remember the Filipino team were over to spar with Team GB and I watched Kal have this absolute war with one of the Filipino internationals. We talked after that and once he made his decision to turn pro, he came down to see me.

"I like where his head's at. He seems to have a good balance mentally and emotionally about where he is and what he wants to achieve. He's full of confidence and he believes that he can go on to unify the division, and I believe that as well."

Yafai had a relatively dominant and uninterrupted run in his first 19 professional bouts, the only setback being a biceps injury that kept him out of the ring for seven months in 2013. The eager young prospect has mixed handspeed, punching power, punch variety and accuracy to dazzle his opposition. He won the Commonwealth championship in his 11th fight before going on

YAFAI'S DANCE CARD?



Eddie Hearn has options for Yafai.

Kal Yafai is targeting the best fighters in the deep junior bantamweight division. Here are five potential opponents, keeping in mind that all of them were scheduled to fight on the same Sept. 9 card after our deadline for this issue.

★

Roman Gonzalez (46-1, 38 KOs): Former four-division world champion and pound-for-pound No. 1 was scheduled to face Wisaksil Wangek in a rematch on Sept. 9.

★

Wisaksil Wangek (43-4-1, 39 KOs): Upset Gonzalez via controversial unanimous decision. Had opportunity to prove it was no fluke in direct rematch.

★

Juan Francisco Estrada (35-2, 25 KOs): Former unified flyweight titleholder has stepped up to 115 pounds in search of more glory. Faced Carlos Cuadras on Sept. 9 card.

★

Carlos Cuadras (36-1-1, 27 KOs): Former WBC 115-pound titleholder gave Gonzalez fits in close decision loss. Victory over Estrada would elevate him to another level.

★

Naoya Inoue (13-0, 11 KOs): Unbeaten Japanese powerhouse has claimed two world titles at different weights and continues to improve.

Yafai won the first of what could be multiple world titles by easily outpointing Luis Concepcion in December.

to establish himself as the WBA's mandatory challenger.

Then came his big opportunity. Yafai faced veteran world titleholder Luis Concepcion on December 10, 2016, in Manchester. Concepcion failed to make weight, meaning the title was on the line for the home fighter only. And Yafai didn't disappoint. From ringside, I found it difficult to give the Panamanian a single round as Yafai tagged him repeatedly with withering combinations to the head and body, which earned him a landslide unanimous decision.

Yafai had come of age.

"It was a really emotional night for me," Yafai said. "That moment of actually winning a world title – when they raised my hand – if I were to watch that on my laptop right now it would make my eyes well up. It's been a long journey and a lot of people might think I've had it easy but, believe me, there was a lot of work in there."

McCracken constructed the game plan, his fighter executed it to perfection and everyone went home in a limousine. "I knew what Kal was going to do in that fight," said the trainer. "A lot of people didn't give him a chance because of the difference in professional experience. Concepcion was a two-weight world champion but the plan was just to fire combinations, shut him down and not let him find any rhythm. Kal frustrated him, beat him to the punch and tied him up when he had to."

Yafai had become Birmingham's first-ever boxing world champion, making his next move obvious. A homecoming title defense against Japan's Suguru Muranaka took place in May at the Barclaycard Arena.

The new titleholder dominated the fight but the experience was far from comfortable for Yafai. Round after round, Muranaka soaked up inhuman amounts of punishment and Yafai damaged both hands on his way to securing a painful unanimous-decision victory.

"The overall performance was OK," said Yafai. "When I watched it back, it wasn't as bad as I initially thought. There were things I did wrong, that I would never do again, but that's how I know I'm still learning and developing. I did things that were amateurish, but there were also some positives. I fought 12 rounds at a good pace and showed a good engine. The kid was no world-beater but he had incredible toughness, and no matter what you hit him with, he came right back. I learned a lot from the Muranaka fight."

And Yafai will get the chance to show his new wares when he takes on Muranaka's unbeaten countryman Sho Ishida on October 28 at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff, Wales. That bout will take place on the undercard of Anthony Joshua's heavyweight title defense against Kubrat Pulev.

Ishida, Yafai's mandatory challenger, could provide a stern test. He is unbeaten (24-0, 13 KOs) and freakishly tall for a junior bantamweight at 5 feet 8 inches.

However, Yafai is already looking toward matchups against the cream of the junior bantamweight division. The names are frightening but the fighter remains fearless: Roman Gonzalez, Wisaksil Wangek, Naoya Inoue, Juan Francisco Estrada and Carlos Cuadras are all on the Englishman's hit list.

"Basically, I want to get this mandatory out the way and do a good job on Ishida," Yafai said in earnest. "After that, I want to get in the mix with the big boys. That's where I need to be. I'm not taking my eye off Ishida because I know how hard it was to get here and I know how hard it will be to keep my world title.

"But I'd like to fight one of these big names, either here or in America. If I could take on one of these guys on HBO or Showtime, that would be brilliant for my profile. That would get me right up there. If Gonzalez beats Wangek and we can get him over here, that would be massive."

Trainer and promoter agree that it's time for Yafai to be let off the leash. McCracken and Hearn both mentioned "Chocolatito" Gonzalez first in terms of future opposition, although the pound-for-pound star is sure to be tested by Wangek on the huge "Superfly" show that will have taken place by the time this issue goes to print.

"Kal is very blessed in that he's in a division which, in the past, couldn't have been less glamorous and now it's one of the most glamorous divisions in boxing," Hearn said. "You have a whole card based around it on September 9 and that's unheard-of.

"Kal has the opportunity to be involved in real superfights. 'Chocolatito' is a fight we really want after Ishida. You have Naoya Inoue. Carlos Cuadras is a great fighter. And Kal is so lucky that he has the ability to fight these big names, particularly in the United States."

One comes away from speaking to Team Yafai with a feeling that the confidence and ambition could not be more genuine. There are world titleholders who get themselves into position for unification fights but face daunting challenges when they eventually take one. With Yafai, there's a sense of destiny. He remains unfazed by the prospect of meeting such formidable opposition.

"Kal's ability to adapt is his number one asset," said McCracken. "It doesn't take him long to figure opponents out. He can mix it up and he's a great counterpuncher. Fans have seen a lot of him going forward but they've yet to see him boxing off the back foot. You'll see it when he's moving on these top kids, picking them off and drawing them onto shots. He's a great all-rounder and there's not much he can't do. You've still not seen the best of him." RING

Tom Gray is a U.K. Correspondent / Editor for RingTV.com and a member of THE RING ratings panel. Follow him on Twitter: @Tom_Gray_Boxing

50-0*

MAYWEATHER-MCGREGOR WAS A BUSINESS BONANZA AND SOMEWHAT SURPRISING BUT IT PROVED NOTHING

By **Norm Frauenheim**

Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Conor McGregor accomplished what they set out to do – give the fans a little something for their money and collect a lot of it.

It ended with Conor McGregor answering questions between sips of whiskey. It was a post-fight news conference. But it could have been last call.

McGregor had a lot to say and a lot to drink in the final few moments of a night full of shots. First, there were Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s shots. Then, there was the whiskey poured into a plastic cup from a bottle advertising McGregor's nickname, "Notorious."

"Wow, this whiskey, Irish whiskey, is so

Some believed going into the fight that Mayweather and McGregor were robbing the fans blind. The ski mask fit the scenario.

ESTER LIN/SHOWTIME

delicious," said McGregor, who sipped and then complained about an early stoppage, saying referee Robert Byrd should have let him "wobble" back to his corner.

Then McGregor wobbled off stage, the black-branded bottle in one hand and nearly empty. The Mayweather-McGregor bender was over, finally emptied of all its excess.

For more than two months since the event was announced in mid-June, there had been trash talk, more trash talk, outrage, promises, predictions, crazy ticket prices, disgust and who-knows-what-all in a hyped-up parade that enraged rivals and even defied expectations.

It was spectacle and often nothing more. Spectacle is substance these days, but even that changed in the opening three rounds of an August 26 event at Las Vegas' T-Mobile Arena that many thought was more farce than fight.

McGregor, a mixed martial arts star and novice boxer, appeared to surprise Mayweather, the best boxer of his generation, with his size and perhaps a jab few thought he had. Halfway through the scheduled 12 rounds, it looked to be even. It was enough to make boxing purists and Las Vegas bookmakers very nervous, or at the very least send them deep into the notorious depths of their own brand of 80-proof.

They needn't have worried, of course. In the end, Mayweather delivered on a promise, scoring a TKO at 1:05 of the 10th round with a fusillade of right hands. It ended the way it was supposed to in a show that in hindsight had something for just about everybody.

For boxing purists, there was an opportunity to express outrage and righteous dismay at what they believed should not have happened. For Irish fans who spent as much as $5,000 apiece for the flight, five nights in Vegas and a small bet that pushed the odds favoring Mayweather down to 4-to-1, there was satisfaction that McGregor was still standing and still willing to fight in the end.

Mostly, there was astonishing money, first for Mayweather and then McGregor. Mayweather was guaranteed $100 million. With his cut of the pay-per-view television revenue, there were estimates he would double his guarantee. Mayweather guessed more – much more – than $200 million, however.

"We do foolish things sometimes," said Mayweather, who isn't called "Money" because he chases fool's gold. "All of us do foolish things. But I'm not a damn fool. If I see an opportunity to make $300 (million)-$350 million in 36 minutes, why not? I had to do it."

For McGregor, there was a $30 million guarantee, according to contracts filed with the Nevada State Athletic Commission. With his percentage of the PPV, the estimate was that he'd take $100 million home to Dublin.

The chance that both would multiply their guarantees appeared likely in the event's immediate aftermath. According to an early buy rate, the event was expected to surpass the 4.6 million pay-per-view record set by Mayweather's decision over Manny Pacquiao in a disappointing bout in May 2015. One guess put the number at 5 million.

That doesn't even include an estimated 2.93 million people who pirated the pay-per-view signal, according to Irdeto, a digital security company, which reported that people saw streams of the nine-plus rounds for free on Periscope, YouTube, Twitch and other social media channels.

Whatever the numbers were, it was a success for just about everybody involved. Mayweather-McGregor was a lot of things, but there's no argument about the money. It was huge. Promoters helped to make sure of it by making it more available than ever.

"It is the widest-distributed event ever," Leonard Ellerbe of Mayweather Promotions said in a conference call about 10 days before the Showtime-televised event.

It's not clear how big the potential audience for Mayweather-McGregor had grown since Mayweather-Pacquiao. But it's fair to say that both fights made everybody rich.

There was only one loser: Ticket brokers got burned. The list price for tickets ranged from $500 to $10,000. Brokers scooped them up, thinking they could sell them on the secondary market at inflated prices. They couldn't.

About an hour before the opening bell, tickets were being purchased for an average price of about $1,350. There were plenty of empty seats at T-Mobile. The arena's reported capacity for boxing is 18,000. The announced crowd for Mayweather-McGregor was 14,623. The 3,377 empty seats were a sign that promoters had over-priced the public ability and/or appetite to see the event live. A more cynical analysis: They got greedy.

"I wouldn't say that," Ellerbe said. "I'd say it was all about delivery. I would say the fans who were here enjoyed it. You don't always get it right."

Ellerbe was right, both about a satisfied crowd and getting the prices wrong. Most of the crowd got caught up in a match that was at least curious, if not unprecedented.

All anyone had to do was look at the bout sheet. There was the unbeaten Mayweather, 40 and yet just a couple of years removed from an undisputed reign at the top of the pound-for-pound debate. Next to his name: a 49-0 record. Then there was McGregor, the UFC star and champion at 155 pounds. Next to his name: "Pro debut." He had 24 UFC bouts (21-3) but no documented experience as a pro boxer.

There were plenty of questions about whether the Nevada Commission should have sanctioned the junior middleweight event in the first place. If all that money had not been involved, would it have approved this matchup?

Sanctioning meant rules prohibiting McGregor from MMA tactics, including a kick that some said was in effect his jab. There was also a clause in McGregor's contract that would have resulted in what was reported to be a huge financial penalty had he resorted to those tactics.

The rules, enforced by financial sanctions in the contract clause, could have eliminated McGregor from resorting to his instincts. He was trained to kick, trained to punch with hammer fists to his opponent's head. Mike Tyson has an old theory that all well-practiced plans are undone by the first big punch to land. In other words, you become who you are when big punches put you in trouble.

It was that theory that had some believing the event would end in a disqualification of McGregor. But the surprise was in the poise exhibited by McGregor, who after it was all over praised Mayweather for being composed. Byrd warned McGregor for blows to the back of the head, especially in the early rounds when Mayweather appeared to turn his

McGregor's depleted energy and a series of right hands from Mayweather spelled the Irishman's doom.

back on the Irishman.

Early on, Mayweather appeared to be unsure about McGregor. By plan or instinct, the defensive-minded, counterpunching Mayweather waited on him, figured him out and realized that the mixed martial artist couldn't hurt him. By the fifth, Mayweather was drilling him at will with right hands.

It looked as if McGregor would hit the canvas in the ninth and again in the 10th. He never did. More significant, the dazed McGregor, perhaps mindful of the contract clause, never resorted to a kick.

McGregor surprised the boxing purists. Surprised Mayweather, too.

"Boxing's reputation was on the line," said Mayweather, who in the early going looked exactly like the 40-year-old man who had not answered an opening bell in a couple of years. "Our game plan was to take our time, go to him, let him shoot his shots early and then take him out down the stretch.

"We know in MMA, he fights for 25 minutes. After 25 minutes, he started to slow down. I guaranteed to everybody that this wouldn't go the distance."

As the fight progressed, Mayweather's muscle memory began to exert itself and take control.

He found his timing. He rediscovered his sense of range. Then, his right hand began to land, land and land. Suddenly, there was swelling around McGregor's eyes. In those Irish eyes, there were mounting signs of fatigue.

The end was near, a historical one for what Mayweather vowed was his last fight. In a state commission-sanctioned bout, Mayweather went 50-0, surpassing late heavyweight champ Rocky Marciano's 49-0 milestone.

It's the Marciano angle that is perhaps the hardest one to explain in an event that managed to defy most explanations. In the immediate aftermath, it was a mere footnote, obscured perhaps by everything else included in the spectacle. But it will be there long after the money is spent and Mayweather-McGregor is forgotten.

In the record book, Mayweather's 50-0 will rank ahead of the 49-0 posted by Marciano, who won his last fight against Archie Moore, a legendary master instead of a novice.

Mayweather was careful to praise Marciano after pushing his record to the milestone mark.

"Rocky Marciano is a legend," Mayweather said. "I take my hat off to him. He paved the way for me to be where I'm at."

But history without a challenge isn't an achievement. At least, it shouldn't be. Look at it this way: Henry Aaron didn't hit a baseball off a tee for the 715th homer that allowed him to surpass Babe Ruth as the home run king on that memorable day in Atlanta on April 8, 1974.

Aaron had to face a major-league pitcher, not some novice. In McGregor, Mayweather was given more than a chance at some easy money. In effect, he was allowed to make history by hitting one off the tee.

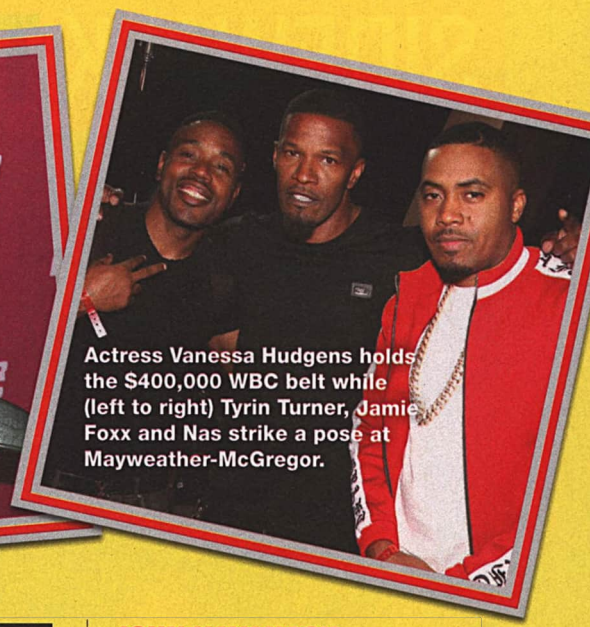
For Marciano's son, Rocky Marciano Jr., Mayweather's victory was an exhibition, instead of a true victory worthy of him surpassing his legendary dad.

"The fight went pretty much the way I expected it to go," Marciano Jr. told the New York Post. "Mayweather would take it slow in the beginning and see what McGregor would throw at him. Mayweather knew that McGregor would tire in the later rounds.

"If people want to say this is breaking Marciano's record, sure, it's disappointing, because you want to see him challenged and fight the best he could. If he wants to be the best pound-for-pound fighter of his generation or his weight class, I think as fans of boxing, we want to see people pitted against the best and then see the result, but that's not what we (got).

"There is such a discrepancy in experience. Will they say, 'Yeah, he got it, but look at how he got his 50th win'? That's the conversation moving forward."

Moving forward, Marciano Jr. would like to see that 50-0 come with an asterisk. Not much chance of that, at least not on the Mayweather T-shirts and caps that are sure to include only a pretty hefty price tag.



Actress Vanessa Hudgens holds the $400,000 WBC belt while (left to right) Tyrin Turner, Jamie Foxx and Nas strike a pose at Mayweather-McGregor.

REPORT CARD

THE MAIN EVENT
B-

The mismatch was expected by many to be a complete disaster. Instead, McGregor was competitive early and battered silly late. It wasn't boring.

MAYWEATHER
B+

Mayweather looked old and rusty in the first few rounds, when he was sizing up his foe. In the end, he couldn't miss with a right hand. Not bad for an old man.

MCGREGOR
D+

Odds were that the novice McGregor would receive an F in this category, so D+ is pretty good. He showed a little quickness, a little athleticism. Little more.

FLOYD MAYWEATHER SR.
Mayweather's trainer

A

Even those who thought Junior would dominate every second of every round have to applaud the game plan: Wear McGregor out and then knock him out.

JOHN KAVANAGH
McGregor's trainer

C

Can't be too hard on Kavanagh; he's not a boxing trainer. That said, the game plan didn't work out well. And there is no excuse for McGregor being gassed so early.

THE JUDGES
C

The scores were 89-81, 89-82, 87-83. Two judges gave McGregor only one of the first three rounds. Huh? Many people gave him all three, as did the third judge.

ROBERT BYRD
The referee

B

Byrd did well overall, particularly the stoppage. McGregor had taken enough punishment. However, McGregor should've lost a point for rabbit punching.

THE ATMOSPHERE
A-

The crowd was loud and passionate, which created an electric atmosphere. The only problem is that there were more than 3,000 empty seats.

THE UNDERCARD
C+

Badou Jack turned in the most impressive performance of the night, stopping Nathan Cleverly in five rounds. Otherwise, the undercard was forgettable.

- Michael Rosenthal

SIDEWALK TKO 1 HAUSER

Former 168-pound titleholder Markus Beyer would tell you that it's just part of the job.

OUR WRITER LEARNED IN AN INSTANT WHAT FIGHTERS ENDURE ON A REGULAR BASIS

By **Thomas Hauser**

Earlier this year, I fell on my face. I was running to catch a bus with a shopping bag in each hand. There was a raised section of sidewalk that I didn't see. The toe of my shoe caught the edge of the sidewalk and I went down.

I knew I was falling. I tried to put my arms in front of me to break the fall but couldn't let go of the bags fast enough.

BOOM!!!

My head was spinning.

I could have beaten the count if I was a fighter. But the referee would have stopped the fight.

I knew I was hurt. The question was, how badly?

I ran my left hand across my face. No blood.

I did a quick cognitive test, asking myself questions that I'd heard ring doctors ask fighters after they'd been knocked out. Not the simple, "Do you know where you are?" But the more sophisticated, "Recite the months of the year backward. What's your telephone number?" I asked myself the results of a basketball game I'd watched the night before.

The right side of my face was throbbing.

So that's what it feels like to get knocked out by a punch you don't see.

Soon, there was a discolored lump high on my cheekbone. The odds were good that I'd have a black eye. There was an abrasion above the edge of my right eyebrow that wasn't bleeding but would turn into a scab. The right side of my upper lip was discolored and swollen, and there was another abrasion above my lip.

I was "lucky." There were no broken bones or other structural damage. I didn't have headaches (symptomatic of a brain bleed) afterward. It took a while to fully heal.

In the days that followed, the people who saw me were kind. To the best of my knowledge, no one tweeted, "It's about time someone punched Hauser in the face." But the experience was a reminder that, every time a fighter enters the ring, he's facing a skilled adversary who's trying to disfigure his face.

Most of us seek immediate medical aid if we're damaged. Certainly, we don't keep doing what we were doing. After I fell, I didn't get up and run as fast as I could to catch the next bus. But fighters keep fighting. They ask for more.

Light heavyweight contender Seanie Monaghan takes it for granted that, each time he fights, there will be damage to his face.

"It's the price we pay," Monaghan says. "You just don't want to pay a price where something like your eye is functioning differently for the rest of your life. But if you're thinking about things like that too much, you shouldn't be a fighter.

"The worst damage I had,"

Monaghan continues, "was when I fought Elvir Muriqi at Barclays Center (on June 14, 2014). He headbutted me, and it felt like someone slammed a bowling ball into my face. My orbital bone was broken in two places. It broke my nose and severed a tendon. I needed internal and external stitches, and they had to reattach the tendon I use to lift my eyelid. When I woke up the morning after the fight, the pillow was stuck to my face because of all the blood."

Last year, Monaghan was putting his son to bed. Sammy was 4 years old at the time.

"You never lost a fight, right?" Sammy said.

"Nope."

"Except that one fight," Sammy corrected.

"Which fight?"

Sammy pointed to the scar from the Muriqi fight.

"No. I won that one too."

"Sammy got a big smile on his face," Seanie remembers. "He stared straight up at the ceiling, and I could see the wheels in his head turning. He was thinking, 'Wow. You can get hurt that bad and still win.' That was a good message for him. No matter how tough life is, you can still win."

Former world titleholder Paulie Malignaggi had his share of bruises and worse. Now retired, Malignaggi says, "One of the things I hated most was losing a fight and having to get on a plane the next day and everyone is staring at you. If you win, you can say. 'Yeah, I won.' The bruising and swelling is like a badge of honor. If you lost, you're self-conscious about it; especially if people don't know you're a fighter and look at you like, 'That punk got beaten up.'"

In 2006, Malignaggi fought a heroic battle against Miguel Cotto. His right eye socket was broken in the second round. His jaw was horribly swollen. But he persevered, winning four rounds on two of the judges' scorecards and five on the third.

"I had to wait a week for the swelling to go down before they performed the surgery," Malignaggi recalls. "For a long time, I couldn't do things I wanted to do. Not just in boxing, but in the rest of my life too. Italy won the World Cup that year. I spent a lot of time that summer watching soccer on television.

"When you're young," Paulie continues, "it's win at all costs. During a fight, you don't care about the damage. In the Cotto fight, I kept trying to win for every second of every round regardless of the consequences. I don't think I could have done that when I was older. You think about getting hurt more when you're older. The damage adds up. It takes longer to heal. Your face changes. You start to look like a fighter. You want to finish your career healthy, which you're not thinking about when you're young."

Former heavyweight Vinny Maddalone wasn't known for his defense.

"I got cut in most of my fights," Maddalone says. "I needed hundreds of stitches. During a fight, it feels like you're getting hit with a baseball bat. You don't think about the damage while the fight is going on. But afterward, a lot of times, I felt the hurt in my head for a couple of days. The first few days after a fight, the way your face looks gets worse. Then the bruises go from purple to green to yellow to the way you looked before. The bruises never bothered me. I never cared about what other people thought. That was where I earned my stripes. I knew where the bruises came from. If you play football and your uniform isn't dirty, you didn't play."

Micky Ward, whose career highlights include a bloody ring trilogy against Arturo Gatti, has similar thoughts.

"It's weird," Ward says. "You know there's blood during the fight. You know you're getting hit. But you don't think about it. After I fought Arturo the first time, I went back to my room and went to bed. Around 3 o'clock, I woke up to take a pee. I went into the bathroom, saw my face in the mirror, and said, 'Oh, Jesus. I should have moved my head more.'"

Chuck Wepner is boxing's patron saint of damaged faces. He fought professionally for 14 years against the likes of Sonny Liston, George Foreman and Ernie Terrell. On March 24, 1975, "The Bayonne Bleeder" (as Wepner was known) lasted 19 seconds short of 15 rounds against Muhammad Ali. Wepner's courage that night inspired an out-of-work actor named Sylvester Stallone to write a screenplay entitled "Rocky."

"A lot of the damage to my face came from the way I fought," Wepner says, stating the obvious. "I'd take two or three punches to land one. Al Braverman (who trained and managed Wepner) used to say, 'Three steps forward and two back.' But I liked to take five steps forward."

"I got 328 stitches over my eyes," Wepner continues. "I think that's an all-time world record. One time, I needed 51 stitches inside my mouth. I got 70-something stitches after I fought Sonny Liston. Barney Felix refereed that fight. They stopped it on cuts and because I couldn't see. Barney asked me, 'How many fingers do I have up?' And I answered, 'How many guesses do I get?' The morning after is when the pain catches up to you. You feel like hell. But if you won, the way you look doesn't bother you that much."

Meanwhile, it's worth noting that, when I fell on the sidewalk, I'd been on the way to have lunch with my 30-year-old niece.

"It doesn't look so bad," Jessica assured me when she surveyed the damage. "It makes you look kind of rugged."

Or like a guy who fell on his face.

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book – "A Hard World: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing" – was published by the University of Arkansas Press. In 2004, the Boxing Writers Association of America honored Hauser with the Nat Fleischer Award for career excellence in boxing journalism.

Was Mayweather-McGregor only the start of crossover fights in the U.K.?

CROSSOVER HYSTERIA

THE U.K. BOUGHT INTO **MAYWEATHER-MCGREGOR** IN A MASSIVE WAY

Conor McGregor vs. Floyd Mayweather Jr. generated more interest across the pond than any fight ever witnessed.

Here's a sprinkling of indicators:

- Official pay-per-view figures weren't available at our press time but word in boxing circles was that they are comparable to those generated by Mayweather-Pacquiao and Anthony Joshua-Wladimir Klitschko.
- The live blog report at The Telegraph reached numbers that not even the U.K. general election could match. As the fight got underway, more 10 million were reading. And that was at around 5 a.m. Sunday here. That trend will have been replicated across many media outlets in the U.K.
- It's not often that I'm called upon to talk about boxing on BBC Radio 4's "Today" program, a broadcast that normally features politics and other heavyweight news of the day. Indeed, all the biggest programs on television wanted an "in" on the fight.
- McGregor could be seen on the front, center and back of all the national newspapers. Afterward, The Telegraph even ran a section praising the entertainment value of the fight. Same pretty much everywhere.

This gives you an idea of how massive the event was in the U.K. Staggering, really.

The big question, given the reaction to Mayweather-McGregor and the mammoth amount of money it generated, is whether it will spawn more crossover events? I think it will, because other potential matchups, while relatively modest, will put butts on seats and in front of TVs.

Tony Bellew talked of a fight with the UFC's Michael Bisping. That would be Liverpool vs. Manchester. David Haye was called out by Jimi Manuwa, a big-hitting fighter in the UFC. Both are South London men, which would make it a bitter clash. Even heavyweight titleholder Anthony Joshua mentioned

an MMA fight down the line. These fights would generate more than enough interest to make money in the U.K.

Another question: Will McGregor box again? I imagine only if he attracts a big-name opponent. Paulie Malignaggi is not a big enough draw. Amir Khan might be good, though. And he seems open to the idea.

Regardless, the experiment worked. Two huge stars from different ends of the combat sports spectrum came together for Mayweather's last fight and made it a success. But for me, once was enough.

NATHAN CLEVERLY

I'll never forget an interview 10 years ago with Nathan Cleverly. He was just finishing a degree in applied mathematics at Cardiff University and was one fight away from securing the British, Commonwealth and European 175-pound titles in record time.

Cleverly – ring sobriquet "Clever Boy" – is actually a math wizard. He needn't have boxed.

"I was actually thinking of doing medicine and becoming a doctor. But boxing has just taken me over. It's addictive," he said to me in 2007, when he was 20. He felt unbeatable. "I just have to do it. It's in me. There's a huge thrill being in the sport, the feeling of invincibility. It's like the Rocky story; it's magical. A huge adrenaline rush."

He explained his theory that self-destruction bedevils the sport, but that education helped him.

"Intelligence and being educated helps you outside the ring, helps you when you are not boxing," he said. "I think studying in further education makes you inquire more. I don't ever want to say, 'I could have been a contender.' But once the hunger has gone, I'm out of it."

That moment has come. Cleverly, a former light heavyweight titleholder, lost to Badou Jack on the Mayweather-McGregor undercard and announced his retirement soon afterward. Jack has become a bit of a Brit-beater. He defeated George Groves and fought to a draw with James DeGale in super middleweight title fights.

"Jack was very strong," Cleverly said. "He caught me and broke my nose in the third round. It was a downward spiral from there. I was wounded and protecting myself. It's horrible but part of the sport."

Having previously considered retirement following the first defeat of his career, by Sergey Kovalev in 2013, Cleverly left no doubt about his intentions in Las Vegas. It's the right time for the 30-year-old. Thank you, Nathan Cleverly. It has been a pleasure writing about this gentleman boxer and math whiz from Wales.

ANTHONY YARDE

Cleverly has departed the scene, but another has stepped forward: Londoner Anthony Yarde, who is 12-0 (11 knockouts) and one of the most exciting light heavyweight prospects out there. Like Cleverly was before him, the 25-year-old's career is being masterminded by promoter Frank Warren. And already he has broken into the Top 10 of the WBO's rankings.

Yarde is a former all-around sports man of some repute. He had some success as a sprinter and thrower in track and field and also was good enough in soccer to try

Nathan Cleverly called it quits after his knockout loss to Badou Jack.

out for Queens Park Rangers and play for Tumbridge Wells before committing himself to boxing.

The now-WBO European light heavyweight titleholder said growing up in Hackney, a very tough area of East London, has shaped him.

"I grew up in the pits of East London, where you'd see people fighting for free almost every day," he said. "Even now, there are still people getting stabbed and shot. That's a ghetto. You've got a lot of council flats (housing projects) and a lot of crime in those areas. I would never change where I grew up because it played a big part in who I am today.

"Everyone has a choice in life and how you deal with certain situations and retaliate to certain situations. I got a tattoo on my arm aged 17 and it says, 'In life we go through different struggles but how we deal with them makes us who we are.' I believe that 100 percent. I believe in being the best product of your environment and trying to change."

Keep a close eye on Yarde, who is trained by Tunde Ajayi. He's a very bright young man with terrifying power. It's early, but he has all the makings of a star.

CARL FRAMPTON

On August 21, in what seemed a sudden move from left field, Carl Frampton confirmed that he had left Barry McGuigan's Cyclone Promotions. In a tweet, the boxer thanked the McGuigan family "for our time together" and said he was confident "now is the right time to move forward and take my career into my own hands."

It was somewhat odd. The union had seen Frampton rise to become a great force in boxing, as a two-weight world titleholder and THE RING Magazine's Fighter of the Year in 2016.

The two forces, boxer and promoter, have refused to air the reasons in public. For now.

That followed one of the most freakish fight cancellations in modern times when Frampton's opponent, Andres Gutierrez, suddenly withdrew on the eve of their scheduled July 29 contest after a fall in the shower left the Mexican with a concussion, a broken and cut nose, two broken teeth (one of which was embedded in his gums) and a huge gash underneath his chin that exposed his jawbone.

Gutierrez was so badly injured that he couldn't possibly have fought, Blain McGuigan, the event's promoter, told me on the day of the scheduled fight.

"He slipped and hit the tap under his chin, which flipped him over, and he fell on his face on the bottom of the shower," a source told me. "Andres was knocked unconscious. And when he woke up, he was in a pool of blood."

On the same day of Gutierrez's accident, Frampton failed to make the 126-pound limit by a pound for what was supposed to be a WBC title eliminator

Strange times for Frampton. It will be intriguing to see what he does next.

Cheers.

TOP 10

1. CARL FRAMPTON
2. ANTHONY JOSHUA
3. TONY BELLEW
4. JAMES DEGALE
5. LEE SELBY
6. TERRY FLANAGAN
7. GEORGE GROVES
8. KELL BROOK
9. KAL YAFAI
10. JAMIE MCDONNELL

11-15: Billy Joe Saunders, Ryan Burnett, Callum Smith, Scott Quigg, Tyson Fury.

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AP

EXCERPTS FROM THE RINGTV.COM EDITOR'S POPULAR COLUMN

Since 2001, RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer has held an ongoing dialog – which occasionally becomes heated debate – with boxing fans from around the world in "Dougie's Mailbag." The following excerpts are from the August 28 edition of the Monday mailbag.

DAVID, from Nashville, Tennessee, was surprised by the way the Floyd Mayweather-Conor McGregor fight played out. "Floyd did come forward and walked the Irishman down but Conor's awkward style made it ugly to watch," he said. "McGregor gassed out and Floyd got rid of him. Floyd has (to me) lost a step and it is probably good that he wasn't in there with Errol Spence or Keith Thurman. It might have been a tougher night for him." David added that it upsets him when members of the media say that Mayweather beat Rocky Marciano's record, given that several lower-weight fighters have surpassed 49 consecutive victories, including Ricardo Lopez and Julio Cesar Chavez.

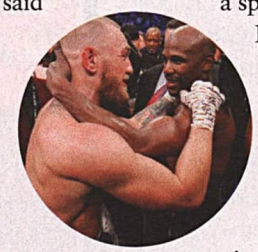
DOUGIE's reply: I've probably watched less than one minute of Mayweather-McGregor and your description isn't making me want to see it in its entirety. From the little I watched it looked as if McGregor was not "awkward" in the effective, unorthodox way; he was awkward in the manner that a novice who has to think about his every move is.

Saying Spence and Thurman "might have been a tougher night" for Mayweather is quite an understatement.

Regarding Marciano's 49-0 record, the mark doesn't mean much outside of the heavyweight division. It had significance because:

1. Marciano, who was very popular, retired with that record as the undefeated heavyweight champion when that was still the biggest prize in sports; and

2. Thirty-one years after Rocky's retirement (and 31 years ago), then-IBF heavyweight titleholder Larry Holmes (who wasn't that popular) came within one victory of equaling Marciano's record but fell short by losing a decision to Michael Spinks. Holmes, who was a salty bastard, had a bit of a meltdown during the post-fight press conference, said some nasty things about Rocky and referenced how the Marciano family was "lighting candles" and "praying" that he would lose. I think Marciano's brother said (probably just to needle Holmes) that there was indeed a "curse" that prevented heavyweight champs from breaking 49-0.



So the "Marciano curse" became a thing in the general sports media (back when newspapers and local broadcast news affiliates still bothered to regularly cover boxing), and whenever boxers in any weight class got close to 49-0 (or even 49 bouts without a loss) – from hapless Danish heavyweight Brian Nielsen to the late Johnny Tapia to Indonesian featherweight beltholder Chris John – they would reference the former heavyweight champ.

But it's just silly to look at it as some universal mark in boxing. As you noted, more than a few lighter-weight fighters have started their careers with more than 50 consecutive victories, including all-time greats such as Willie Pep (62-0), Nino Benvenuti (65-0) and, of course, Chavez, who was 87-0 before suffering a blemish on his record – a controversial draw to fellow great Pernell Whitkaer – and achieved 89-0-1 before experiencing his first official loss. Win streaks like those are amazing, but what's even more impressive to me are the win streaks that some boxing greats put together AFTER losing. For example, following his first loss, to fellow Hall of Famer Sammy Angott, Pep was unbeaten in his next 73 bouts (including one draw) before suffering his second loss, to fellow great Sandy Saddler. So, if your math is decent, you'll note that Pep brought a 134-1-1 record into his first bout with Saddler. Pep brought a 152-2-1 record into his rubber match with Saddler just 10 years into his pro career. Carlos Monzon began his career with a modest 16-3 record and then went unbeaten over his next 80 bouts (which includes nine draws) during a span of 13 years. Sugar Ray Robinson was 40-0 before losing for the first time against fellow great Jake LaMotta just a couple years into Robinson's pro career. He was unbeaten in his next 91 bouts (which included two draws and a no-contest) before being upset by fellow Hall of Famer Randy Turpin in London. So, if you're keeping count, Robinson carried a 128-2-2 record – compiled over an 11-year span – into his rematch with Turpin.

Somebody tell me again why so many fans and members of the media get excited about a 49-0 or 50-0 record? I guess ignorance is bliss.

Here's another reason Marciano's 49-0 mark was given significance: He not only retired undefeated but he died tragically and prematurely in a plane crash in 1969, which gave him and his record a James Dean-type of mystique with the public. But as beloved as "The Rock" was (and continues to be), it must be noted that he wasn't regarded as a great boxer during his career and his 49-0 record hasn't put him above fellow former heavyweight champs Joe Louis and Muhammad Ali on any all-time heavyweight rankings compiled by respectable boxing historians. In fact, more than a few rank that salty bastard Holmes over Marciano.

BILL, from Canada, wondered who Miguel Cotto, whose unanimous decision over ridiculously tough

Yoshihiro Kamegai on August 26 ended nearly two years of inactivity, will fight next? "He looked good against Kamegai but couldn't put him away," Bill said. "Cotto mentioned the Canelo Alvarez-Gennady Golovkin winner but I can't see him beating either. David Lemieux would be a mistake." Bill added that he loves watching Cotto box but can't envision a "big-money fight" that the future Hall of Famer wins.

DOUGIE's reply: It's not always about winning. Cotto is a proud fighter but he's not afraid to challenge himself or lose like that other future Hall of Famer who fought on Aug. 26.

Who will Cotto choose to fight in the final bout of his career? Good question. The high-profile/money fights are at 160 pounds and come with a lot of risk. Cotto has a belt at 154 pounds and still has his form at that weight, but there aren't many options for him. If politics could be worked out, a unification bout vs. Erislandy Lara could be interesting. It wouldn't be a Fight of the Year candidate but it would appease boxing purists. And I don't think Lara can lay on the physical damage that GGG, Lemieux and a 160-pound Canelo could. The Puerto Rico-vs.-Cuba aspect of the matchup could make for a fun story angle. That's not a storied rivalry in professional boxing, but both Caribbean islands obviously have rich histories in the sport. Personally, I think Liam Smith would make for the most appropriate "swan song" fight. He brings U.K. attention to the fight and he's known a bit in the U.S., thanks to his fight with Canelo last year. And he has the right style to make for an entertaining contest. Cotto should outclass Smith, as Canelo did, but the Liverpudlian's physical strength and tenacity would make it competitive. Having said that, if Cotto chooses the Canelo-GGG winner or Lemieux as his final fight, more power to him.

Regarding Cotto's performance against Kamegai, I think the freakishly resilient Japanese slugger did his job as a gatekeeper, which is to let us know what the four-division titleholder has left at this stage of his career. Cotto's legs, reflexes, timing and boxing form/technique are still there. He moved and punched very well. However, he's not a big junior middleweight, and he's not untouchable in terms of his defense. He can land with significant leverage (and I think he would have stopped a few contenders with the same shots he nailed Kamegai with), but he's not an offensive force, and he would be even less so fighting above 154 pounds.

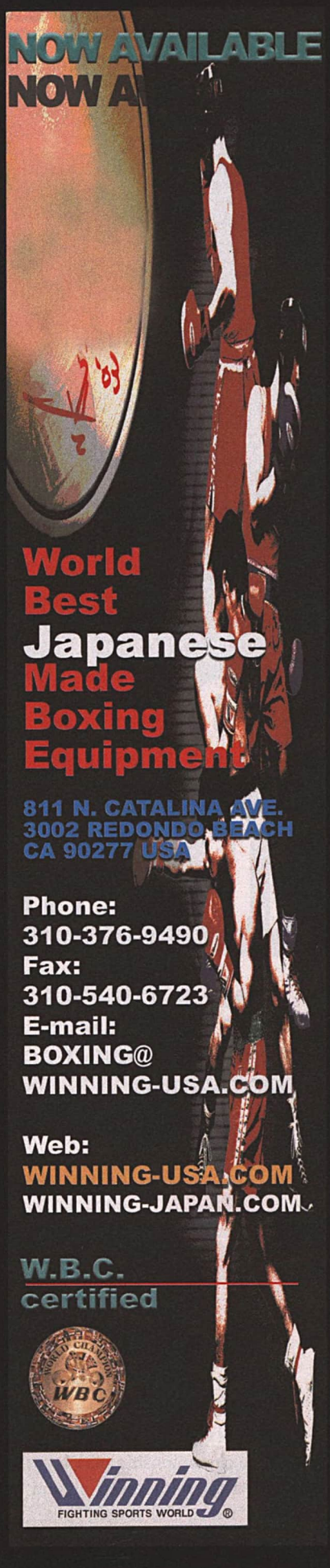
JAMAAL, from Louisiana, was impressed with Badou Jack's stoppage of light heavyweight contender Nathan Cleverly on the Mayweather-McGregor undercard. He wonders how Fischer believes Jack would fare against RING champ Andre Ward, Sergey Kovalev and Adonis Stevenson.

DOUGIE's reply: I think a fifth-round stoppage of the usually tough and game Welshman is quite a statement for the former 168-pound beltholder.

I would favor Ward to beat him via a competitive but clear decision, but I like his chances against Kovalev and Stevenson, although those two light heavyweights present threats because of their experience, underrated ring generalship and obvious power.

Kovalev has talked openly about hanging up the gloves, which makes me wonder if he's still mentally in the game. If Krusher isn't 100 percent motivated, a strong, solid, technical grinder like Jack can get the better of him.

Stevenson has the speed, explosive power and overall athleticism that Jack lacks, but the Las Vegas-based Swede has a better foundation and fewer technical flaws, and he has the more consistent offense/work rate. The WBC titleholder is also getting a bit long in the tooth (he's 39) and he hasn't gone the distance in more than two years. I can see Jack outworking the Haitian-Canadian, taking him deep and drowning him.



FROM PAIN TO GAIN

Shakur Stevenson is skillful but needs to develop strength.

SHAKUR STEVENSON USES HIS OLYMPIC DISAPPOINTMENT AS MOTIVATION

Shakur Stevenson's upper lip began quivering and soon tears began rolling down his baby face.

He had come up short of his lifelong goal to capture gold at the 2016 Olympics in Rio. Silver was poor consolation after he lost a close decision to Robeisy Ramirez of Cuba in the championship match.

It's a disappointment he said he'll "never, ever forget," but something positive emerged from the heartbreak: He uses the setback as fuel to prove he's the best fighter to emerge from those Games.

Better than promotional stablemate Michael Conlan, the bronze medalist with whom Stevenson appears to be on a collision course. Better than Tony Yoka, who claimed gold as a super heavyweight and appears to have a bright future.

And better than fighters like Charles Conwell and Teofimo Lopez, teammates who are highly touted prospects as pros.

Stevenson grew up in a crime-ridden neighborhood in Newark, New Jersey, which has one of the highest murder rates in the country. And, according to FBI statistics, one in four of its citizens lives in poverty.

"I just want to show the people in Newark and the people that come up from Newark who are in poverty and struggling ... that don't mean nothing," Stevenson said one day before he notched his third pro victory, a shutout decision over David Michel Paz on ESPN.

"If you really got a dream, you go out there and chase it, and you can get what you deserve and get what you want and get a better life."

That's exactly what Stevenson grabbed with both hands. He escaped from "Brick City" and never looked back, eliminating the kind of bad influences that have ruined the careers of many promising fighters.

First, he set up camp at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He

later settled in Burke, Virginia, a suburb of Washington, D.C., the base from which he now pursues his professional dreams.

Toward that end, he found a mentor in RING pound-for-pound champion Andre Ward, who joined rap mogul James Prince and attorney Josh Dubin to form a management team. They guided Stevenson to Top Rank, the Las Vegas-based company with a history of developing Olympians into marketable champions.

When Stevenson met with Bob Arum and Co., he knew he'd found home.

Stevenson's grandfather was a boxing coach and baseball player. One day at the ballpark, when Shakur was only 5, he was introduced to three teenagers who were training in the sweet science and something inside him stirred. The following day, he checked out the gym and "fell in love with the environment."

Soon he was a regular at the boxing club, which helped him cope with the challenges he faced in their neighborhood. That included hunger and stints in a homeless shelter with his mother and nine younger siblings.

He didn't get to know his absent father until he was 12. Stevenson will hear from him from time to time and they'll "chop it up," but the relationship doesn't really go beyond that.

Stevenson was never a "school-type kid." He was more into girls and fighting. Trouble found him at every turn at a variety of schools until he finally dropped out during his senior year. He said he plans to pursue his GED so he has something to fall back on.

"I'm a person who knows how to make a way," he says.

The young man named after the late rapper Tupac Shakur certainly has made a way for himself in boxing, although he is still a work in progress. He is a good athlete with excellent skills but learns every day in the gym.

And, at 20, his body is still developing. He recently hired a strength and conditioning coach to add muscle to his relatively slight frame, which will help him keep stronger, more mature opponents at bay.

Ward is convinced that everything will come together. He sees a future star in his protege.

"If all falls in place like it's supposed to, if he stays focused, I think it's a foregone conclusion," the RING light heavyweight champion said.

"He reminds me a lot of myself in terms of work ethic, some of the things he says when you're around him. When you've been around the sport a long time, you know a great talent when you see one. When you add in the type of kid he is, it was a no-brainer for me."

Stevenson already has overcome a great deal. If he can live up to Ward's vision, the disappointment of the Rio Games will be a distant memory.

THE ESSENTIALS

SHAKUR STEVENSON

Age: 20

Weight class: Featherweight

Height: 5 feet 8 inches

Stance: Southpaw

Hometown: Newark, New Jersey

Record: 3-0 (1 knockout)

Biggest strengths: Smooth boxer ... consistent with jab ... deft footwork ... hand and foot speed.

Biggest question marks: Lack of punching power ... needs to develop strength as he matures ... inside fighting.

3 MORE TO WATCH

RYAN GARCIA

LIGHTWEIGHT

The charismatic Los Angeles resident is just 19 but he already has 10 pro fights, all victories (9 KOs). If the power-punching Latino's talent ends up matching his good looks, he could be a star for a long time to come.

CHARLES CONWELL

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT

The 2016 Olympian signed with Lou DiBella following a decorated amateur career. Conwell (5-0, 5 KOs) could end up being the prize of the U.S. Olympic class.

VIJENDER SINGH

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT

He got a late start, with just nine pro fights (9-0, 7 KOs) at 31, but Singh has developed into a massive draw in India, where he was born and still resides. The three-time Olympian is the only fighter from his country ever to medal. He won bronze in 2008.

 By Thomas Gerbasi

Christina Hammer (right) greeted Claressa Shields after Shields' most recent victory. Could they share a ring again soon?

HAMMER TIME

CHRISTINA HAMMER APPEARS TO BE ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH CLARESSA SHIELDS

Watching two-time Olympic gold medalist Claressa Shields dismantle Nikki Adler in five one-sided rounds to win a pair of super middleweight titles in her fourth pro bout had to be discouraging for fighters who might have to face the 22-year-old.

Christina Hammer was neither discouraged nor intimidated, not even as she sat ringside at the MGM Grand in Detroit while Shields' fans celebrated her victory. In fact, one

of the first people to enter the ring after the fight was the WBC/WBO middleweight titleholder, who made it very clear that she is willing to meet the Flint native in the future.

Less than a week later, back home in Dortmund, Germany, the 27-year-old explained her confidence.

"She is a great fighter, has an aggressive style and her performance against Adler was super, but her opponent was not that strong," Hammer told THE RING over the phone. "It didn't impress me so much, and I'm looking forward to fighting her. I know I can beat her, because I am the better boxer and I have the advantage, especially in technique, footwork, at long range with my jab, and in experience.

That's a bold statement given the emergence of Shields over the last few years as not just the greatest female amateur boxer ever, but as a pro who is expected by many to run over anyone in her path in the thin 160- and 168-pound weight classes.

But if there is a major challenge to be had, it is the Kazakhstan-born Hammer, whose 21-0 record includes 10 successful defenses of the WBO middleweight title she has held since 2010, a WBO super middleweight title and belts at 160 pounds from the WBC and WBF.

The only blemish on her record is from 2014, when a bid to win a 154-pound title ended in a no-contest after Anne Sophie Mathis knocked her out with an illegal blow to the back of the head.

"From this fight I learned a lot," Hammer said. "It was not my weight class and I cut a lot of weight. My doctor was against this fight because I had only 7 percent of body fat at 69 kilograms and this is dangerous for women. But I wanted this fight. I was younger and didn't have as much experience as I do today. Now I only fight at middleweight or up. Here I feel strong, but it is very difficult for me to go down."

As champion for so long and with few mountains left to climb at 160 pounds, the obvious move from a competitive and marketing standpoint is Shields. And the American's team is on board with the matchup, as evidenced by Hammer's appearance in Detroit.

But is this one of those fights that will marinate a little longer?

"I want this fight between me and her, and I could jump on a plane right now and fight her tomorrow," Hammer said. "But both management teams realize that a Shields vs. Hammer fight could be the game-changer for women's boxing. So we like the idea of a mid-2018 superfight in the U.S., which allows proper time to build the profile and awareness of the event."

Hammer is a star in her home country but could use some Stateside love before she takes on the Golden Girl. The Maxim website has given her a head start, featuring her in a recent story entitled "Meet Christina Hammer, the World Champion Boxer Who's Also a Lingerie Model."

She is sponsored by the lingerie, sports bra and swimwear company Anita, the type of business deal that is usually limited to men's boxing.

"They support me all the time, and I'm a different type of fighter," Hammer said. "With Anita, I can show my feminine side, like photo shoots in underwear. (Laughs.) I feel comfortable in both. The people who see me first in pictures from photo shoots don't think I'm a world champion in boxing, but after this, they keep paying attention to me and my fights."

That's one way to build a fan base and become a crossover star. Another way is a well-placed left hook or right cross in a big fight. Hammer has that covered too, as American fans are about to find out.

"The big boxing world is in the USA," she said. "If you make it in the USA, everybody will know you. When people speak about female boxing, I want them to say that the best is Christina Hammer. I want to be successful in the U.S." RING

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

CLARESSA SHIELDS
TKO 5 Nikki Adler

Some expected Claressa Shields to get at least some sort of test in her fourth pro bout from 16-0 Nikki Adler on August 4. But as soon as the opening bell rang, it was clear that Michigan's "T-Rex" was on another level than the then-WBC super middleweight titleholder from Germany. In the fifth round, referee Michael Griffin rescued the overmatched Adler, giving Shields the WBC and vacant IBF belts while raising the question: Can anyone at 160 or 168 pounds compete with her?

POUND FOR POUND

1. **CECILIA BRAEKHUS**
   Norway • 31-0 (8 KOs)
   Welterweight
2. **DELFINE PERSOON**
   Belgium • 38-1 (16 KOs)
   Lightweight
3. **YESICA YOLANDA BOPP**
   Argentina • 32-1 (13 KOs)
   Junior flyweight
4. **JESSICA CHAVEZ**
   Mexico • 29-4-3 (4 KOs)
   Flyweight
5. **AMANDA SERRANO**
   U.S. • 33-1-1 (25 KOs)
   Featherweight
6. **JELENA MRDJENOVICH**
   Canada • 37-10-2 (19 KOs)
   Featherweight
7. **ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS**
   Argentina • 24-2 (10 KOs)
   Junior welterweight
8. **LAYLA MCCARTER**
   U.S. • 39-13-5 (10 KOs)
   Lightweight
9. **IBETH ZAMORA SILVA**
   Mexico • 27-6 (12 KOs)
   Junior flyweight
10. **ESMERALDA MORENO**
    Mexico • 35-9-1 (11 KOs)
    Junior flyweight

Through fights of August 27, 2017

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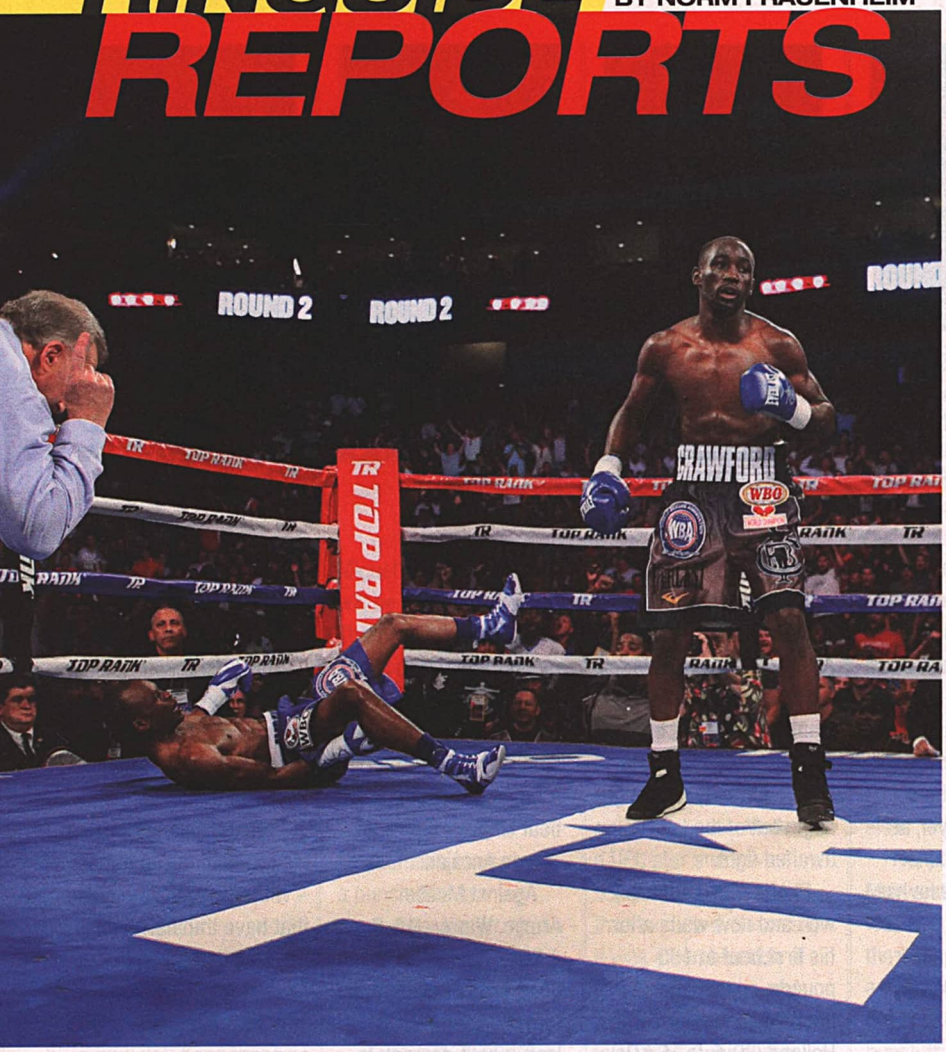
RINGSIDE REPORTS

BY NORM FRAUENHEIM



Terence Crawford (right) overwhelmed Julius Indongo in their title-unification fight.

TERENCE CRAWFORD KO 3 JULIUS INDONGO

Date: August 19
Site: Pinnacle Bank Arena, Lincoln, Neb.
Division: Junior welterweight
Weights: Crawford 140 pounds, Indongo 139
RING ratings (before fight): Crawford C, Indongo No. 2
Network: ESPN

Undisputed and boxing go together like jumbo and shrimp. They are that classic contradiction. Once in a while, however, they can be unified. An alignment of a rare moment and a rare talent can do it. Terence Crawford appears to be that talent.

The moment, at least, was there and Crawford capitalized with astonishing ease, unifying the junior welterweight titles a couple of days before heavenly bodies aligned in a rare solar eclipse.

There might be another eclipse before boxing has another undisputed champion, but for that moment Crawford had all of the 140-pound belts, including the RING championship, and a stronger case for his claim of being No. 1 in the pound-for-pound debate.

Julius Indongo was supposed to test him. The left-handed African has size and power. He looked like an emerging star and he still might be. Within three rounds in an arena not far from where the Nebraska Cornhuskers play football, however, the unbeaten Crawford (32-0, 23 knockouts) eclipsed Indongo's rapid ascendancy.

Crawford dropped Indongo (22-1, 11 KOs) late in the second round and then sent him crashing to the canvas for good with a beautiful left hand to the body at 1:38 of the third.

"I'm the only one who can say I am the undisputed champion of the world, and that's big," Crawford said in the immediate aftermath of becoming the first champion with all five of the belts since middleweight Jermain Taylor took them from Bernard Hopkins on July 16, 2005. "There's nobody else who can say that they are undisputed in their weight division."

Crawford was able to make that claim for exactly 11 days. The fractured nature of the game means nothing stays undisputed for long. Mandatories and sanctioning fees get in the way. Sure enough, Crawford vacated the IBF version of the title on August 30 because of a looming mandatory with Sergey Lipinets.

The move appeared to be the first step in Crawford's long-term plan to fight at welterweight. Bigger money and bigger names await. If Crawford's resume is lacking in any way, it's the absence of a victory over an acknowledged star. Somebody like Manny Pacquiao.

Crawford promoter Bob Arum of Top Rank has long wanted to match Pacquiao with Crawford. In the wake of his stunning loss to unknown Australian Jeff Horn in June in Brisbane, Pacquiao is faded. But he's still a celebrity, known these days for his political career as much as ring fame.

There was talk of a November Horn-Pacquaio rematch in Australia but that matchup seemed to be falling apart as this issue went to press. Horn was considering Bradley Skeete of the U.K. instead. That would leave Pacquiao without an opponent.

But Crawford's dominance might be enough to scare off anybody, including an aging Pacquiao. Crawford, who turns 30 on September 28, is approaching his prime.

"I need that 147-pound belt," Crawford said after a victory that left no dispute about whether he can win one. »

WORLDWIDE RESULTS— Go to: bit.ly/worldwide-results or scan the QR code to see weekly fight results at RingTV.com.

MIKEY WILLIAMS

SHO KIMURA
TKO 11
NO. 5 ZOU SHIMING
July 28, Shanghai

Zou Shiming stars alongside his 4-year-old son in a Chinese reality TV show, "Dad, Where are We Going?"

Good question.

After losing to Japanese flyweight Sho Kimura, it wasn't clear whether Zou (9-2, 2 KOs) would answer another opening bell.

In his first pro bout without a Top Rank contract and trainer Freddie Roach, Zou was overwhelmed by Kimura (15-1-2, 8 KOs), whose job delivering beer crates didn't pay him enough to buy a good pair of ring shoes. But Kimura didn't need new shoes. He took the WBO title, in the process overcoming a bloodied right eye to floor the two-time Olympic gold medalist in the 11th round.

With his back on the canvas, Zou, 36, waved "no mas" to the crowd and referee, who ended it at 2:28 of the 11th.

The gesture also might have been his goodbye to the sport.

MIKEY GARCIA
UD 12 **ADRIEN BRONER**
July 29, Brooklyn (Showtime)

New weight, same Mikey Garcia.

Garcia continued to show there are few limits on his command of pace, timing and skill. He had it at 126 pounds, 130 and 135. It was there, as thorough as ever, at 140, this time against the biggest name he has faced.

Adrien Broner never had a chance in losing a 116-112, 117-111, 116-112 decision.

"One of my best performances ever," said Garcia (37-0, 30 KOs), ranked THE RING's No. 1 lightweight and now No. 2 junior welterweight.

A month after the victory, it wasn't clear what was next for Garcia. He's talked about a title unification bout against Jorge Linares. He's even talked about going to 147. All the while, there's talk about him facing Vasyl Lomachenko.

Meanwhile, there were only questions about Broner (33-3, 24 KOs), an ex-welterweight titleholder who lost for the first time at 140.

JERMALL CHARLO
TKO 4 **JORGE HEILAND**
July 29, Brooklyn, N.Y. (Showtime)

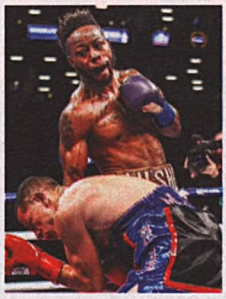
If trickle-down economics exist at middleweight in the wake of Canelo Alvarez-Gennady Golovkin, Jermall Charlo wants to be there, in position to capitalize on any opportunity that might come out of the long-awaited fight.

Charlo (26-0, 20 KOs) won and now waits after his first bout at 160 pounds, a stoppage of hobbled contender Jorge Heiland (29-5-2, 16 KOs).

"I'm ready. Bring on the biggest names at 160," said Charlo, a former 154-pound titleholder who went home to Houston and encountered another fight in the battle to save his home from Hurricane Harvey's floods. "I'm the real Tommy Hearns. It's my turn."

Charlo's middleweight debut looked easy, mostly because his Argentine opponent limped on an injured left leg. Right hands knocked Heiland down in the second and finished him at 2:13 of the fourth.

With the victory, Charlo became the No. 1 challenger to Golovkin's WBC title.



RAU'SHEE WARREN
UD 12
NO. 9 MCJOE ARROYO
July 29, Brooklyn, N.Y. (Showtime)

On Rau'shee Warren's report card, it was a B-plus performance. He didn't exactly ace it. He didn't have to. But an A might be required to beat Filipino titleholder Jerwin Ancajas.

Against McJoe Arroyo, Warren (15-2, 4 KOS) just needed a good win to help him forget a controversial loss, a split decision to Zhanat Zhakiyanov in February.

Warren's career had gone sideways with two losses in three bouts. It was time to move on and the three-time Olympian did, dropping from bantamweight and employing a consistent jab and busy attack for a 117-111, 118-110, 117-111 decision over Arroyo (17-2, 8 KOs) in a 115-pound bout.

"I really feel good at this weight," Warren said. "Now, it's time to go get a strap. I want to get a title, then go back down to 112 for another title. But first, I want to take care of Jerwin Ancajas."

NO. 1 VASYL LOMACHENKO
TKO 7 **MIGUEL MARRIAGA**
August 5, Los Angeles (ESPN)

Vasyl Lomachenko's artistry on battered canvas continues.

This time it was against Miguel Marriaga, a former featherweight contender who was there mostly to keep the Ukrainian busy.

Lomachenko performed his art – some call it magic – with eye-catching moves that have transformed his march into the pound-for-pound conversation into something of a solo performance.

Marriaga (25-3, 21 KOs) was the latest with no chance, suffering two knockdowns before his corner surrendered after the seventh round.

"I did everything by the plan we had," Lomachenko (9-1, 7 KOs) said after the third defense of his junior lightweight title.

It's a plan promoter Bob Arum says he hasn't seen executed so well since Muhammad Ali.

"Fast, reflexes, everything," Arum said.

But proof of the plan rests in a real challenge, and maybe it will come from Guillermo Rigondeaux on December 9 in New York.

NO. 6 LUIS NERY TKO 4 C SHINSUKE YAMANAKA

August 15, Kyoto, Japan (NTV, beIN)

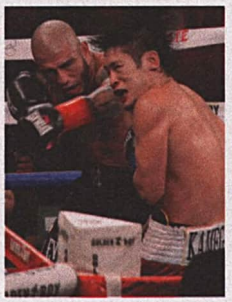
First, there was an upset. Then there was controversy.

For Shinsuke Yamanaka, as good a bantamweight as any in the world for the last couple of years, there was only uncertainty.

Yamanaka lost for the first time in the 13th consecutive defense of his WBC title to Luis Nery, a Mexican who rocked him with a huge left hand that prompted Yamananka's trainer to throw in the towel at 2:29 of the fourth round.

Nine days later, the WBC reported it had been notified by the Voluntary Anti-Doping Association that Nery (24-0, 18 KOs) was positive for a PED – a steroid – in pre-fight testing. The WBC was waiting on VADA's results of the B-sample test before a further ruling.

Without a rematch, Yamanaka (27-1-2, 19 KOs) said he would retire. He had hoped to equal a Japanese record for the most consecutive title defenses.



NO. 3 MIGUEL COTTO UD 12 YOSHIHIRO KAMEGAI

August 26, Carson, Calif. (HBO)

Miguel Cotto says there will be one more fight. Then he promises to say goodbye. But don't expect him to merely wave farewell to the only thing he has known for the last 36 years.

The only gesture he seems to know is a punch. There were many from him in what he promised was the penultimate bout in a Hall of Fame career.

Cotto (41-5, 33 KOs) punched his way out of some early pressure from Yoshihiro Kamegai (27-4-2, 24 KOs), scoring a 120-108, 119-109, 118-110 decision over the resilient Japanese fighter for a vacant junior middleweight belt, the seventh in his decorated career.

Cotto wasn't sure whom he'd face in his retirement bout, likely in December in front of his Puerto Rican fans at New York's Madison Square Garden.

"I'm always one to go out there and face the best," Cotto said.

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. TKO 10 CONOR MCGREGOR

August 26, Las Vegas (Showtime PPV)

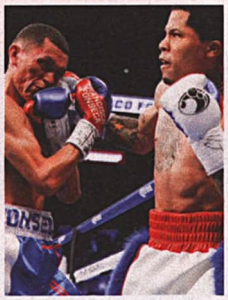
What this matchup turned out to be – farce, fight or something in-between – depends on how you looked at it.

Some say it was competitive for a few rounds because McGregor, a UFC star and novice boxer, was a little better than expected. Some say it was a combination of Mayweather's age and rust, as well as his plan to let McGregor punch himself out. That's how it played out.

However one describes it, the result was as one-sided as it could be, Mayweather pounding a gassed McGregor with one hard right after another until referee Robert Byrd had to rescue him at 1:05 of the 10th round.

"I didn't do any sparring for a month," said Mayweather, who ran his record to 50-0 (27 KOs) to pass Rocky Marciano's retirement mark of 49-0. "My hands are real brittle and I wanted them to be solid when I came out here.

"If I had a serious hand injury, I wouldn't have been able to hit so hard."



NO. 5 GERVONTA DAVIS KO 8 FRANCISCO FONSECA

August 26, Las Vegas (Showtime PPV)

Gervonta Davis lost his title on the scale. He lost respect in the ring.

Davis won the fight, an eighth-round stoppage of Francisco Fonseca, but not much else.

The protégé of Floyd Mayweather Jr., who was two pounds over the 130-pound limit for a defense of his IBF title, dropped Fonseca with a punch to the back of the head at :39 of the eighth.

"An illegal punch," said Fonseca (19-1-1, 13 KOs), a Costa Rican who went to the canvas and stayed there on hands and knees for several long moments.

Davis (19-0, 18 KOs) denied there was anything illegal about the blow. The Baltimore fighter mocked Fonseca in the end by mimicking him, resting his hands and knees on the canvas in the same beaten posture.

When Davis stood up, the crowd erupted in boos, which was the only thing he earned.

BADOU JACK TKO 5 NO. 7 NATHAN CLEVERLY

August 26, Las Vegas (Showtime PPV)

Badou Jack belongs in the light heavyweight division. He made that brutally clear.

Jack (21-1-2, 13 KOs) took charge early in his return to 175 pounds and never let up, sending Nathan Cleverly (30-4, 16 KOs) into retirement with a fifth-round TKO on the Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Conor McGregor card.

Jack, a former super middleweight titleholder from Sweden training in Las Vegas, battered Cleverly to both the head and body before finally putting the Welshman away with a barrage of hard, unanswered punches that prompted the referee to step in at 2:47 of the fifth round.

"Time to say goodbye," Cleverly said in a tweet. "Too many miles on the clock."

For Jack, there was a new set of possibilities. At the top of his list: Adonis Stevenson.

"Fight somebody real," he said of – and to – a longtime champ known for ducking Sergey Kovalev.

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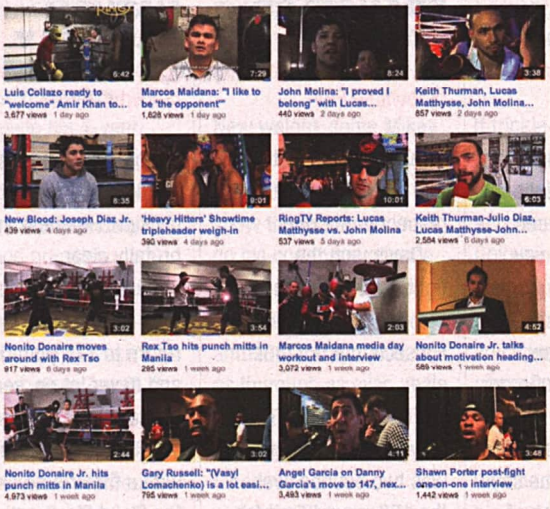

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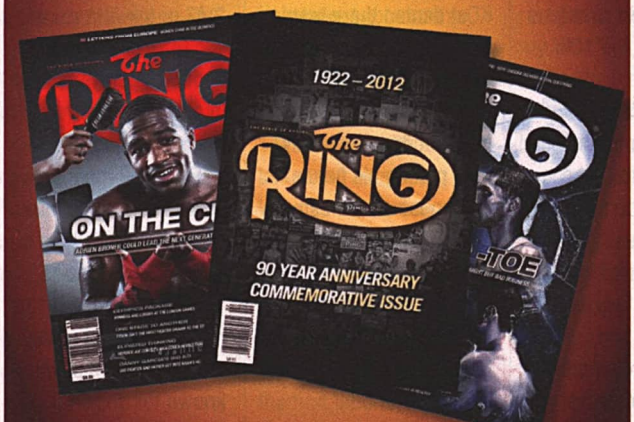

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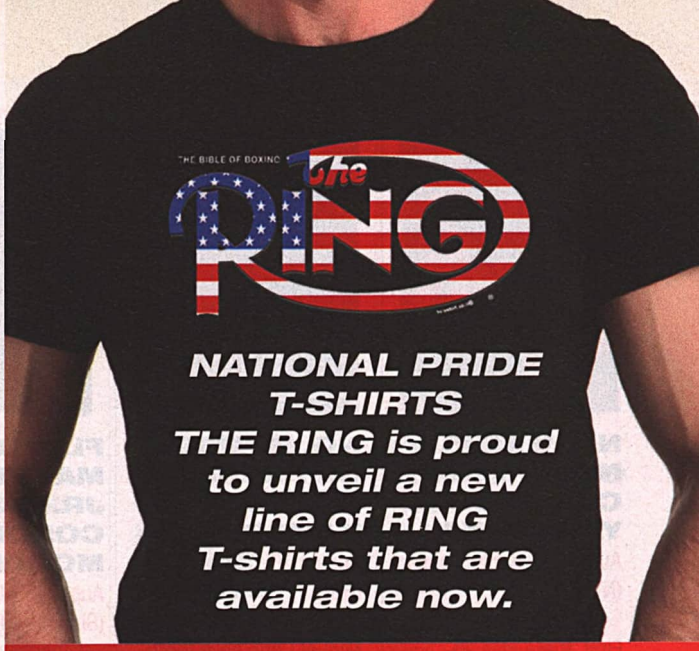

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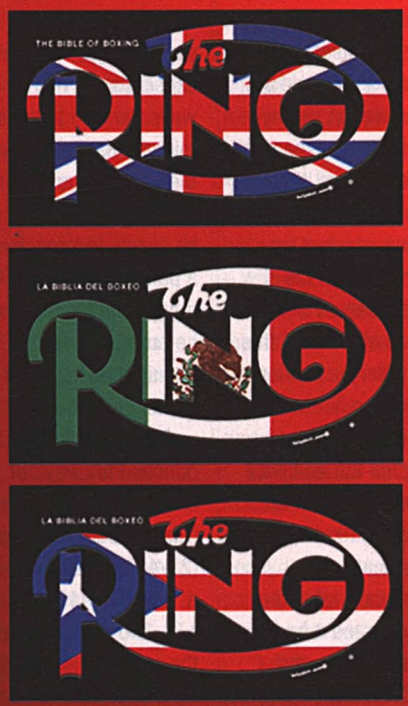

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COMING UP

Predictions are made by RING staff members Michael Rosenthal, Doug Fischer, Brian Harty and Mike Coppinger.

SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 22 – Gilberto Ramirez (No. 2) vs. Jesse Hart (No. 10), super middleweights (for Ramirez's WBO title), Tucson, Ariz. Also, Oscar Valdez (No. 6) vs. Genesis Servania, featherweights (for Valdez's WBO title).

SEPTEMBER 23 – Jorge Linares (C) vs. Luke Campbell, lightweights (for Linares' RING and WBA titles), Inglewood, California (HBO). Also, Antonio Orozco (No. 3) vs. Roberto Ortiz, junior welterweights.

SEPTEMBER 23 – Joseph Parker (No. 6) vs. Hughie Fury, heavyweights (for Parker's WBO title), Manchester, England.

SEPTEMBER 23 – Yunier Dorticos vs. Dmitry Kudryashov, cruiserweights (World Boxing Super Series), San Antonio.

SEPTEMBER 26 – Eduard Ramirez vs. Leduan Barthelemy, featherweights, Las Vegas (Fox Sports 1/Fox Deportes).

SEPTEMBER 26 – "Golden Boy Boxing on ESPN" (ESPN Deportes).

SEPTEMBER 30 – Mairis Briedis (No. 4) vs. Mike Perez, cruiserweights (for Briedis' WBC title, World Boxing Super Series), Riga, Latvia.

SEPTEMBER 30 – Juan Manuel Lopez vs. Jayson Velez, junior lightweights, Juncos, Puerto Rico.

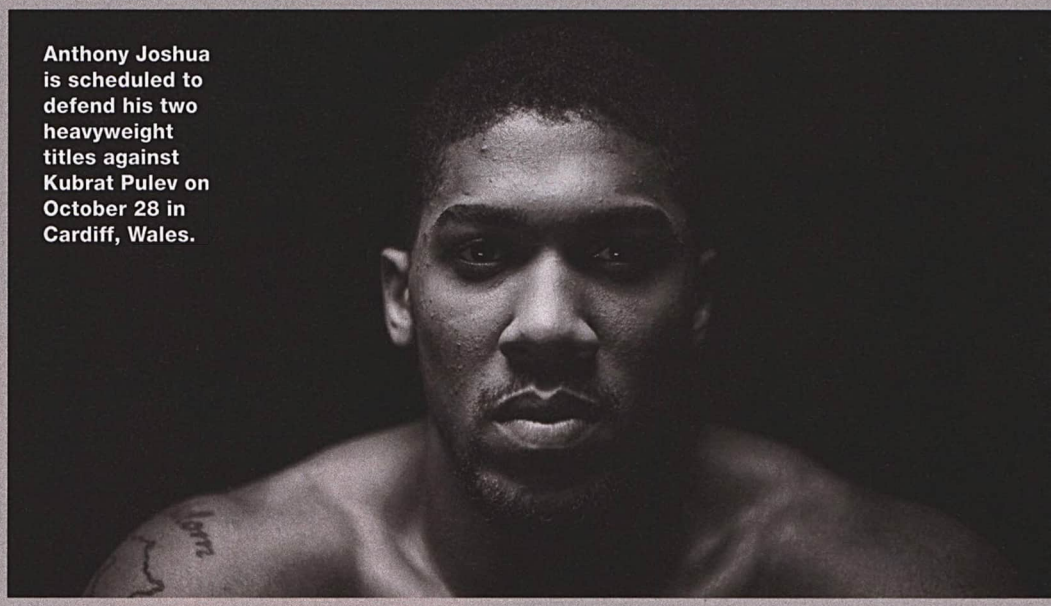
SEPTEMBER 30 – Paul Butler vs. Stuart Hall, bantamweights, Liverpool, England.

SEPTEMBER 30 – "Golden Boy Boxing on ESPN" (ESPN Deportes).

OCTOBER

ANTHONY JOSHUA VS. KUBRAT PULEV

Date: October 28
Location: Cardiff, Wales



Anthony Joshua is scheduled to defend his two heavyweight titles against Kubrat Pulev on October 28 in Cardiff, Wales.

Division: Heavyweights (for Joshua's IBF title)
RING Ratings: Joshua No. 1; Pulev No. 3
TV: Showtime (U.S.); Sky Box Office (U.K.)
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★ ★ ★ ★
Also fighting: Kal Yafai (No. 6) vs. Sho Ishida, junior bantamweights (for Yafai's WBA title).
Significance: Joshua (19-0, 19 KOs) isn't taking a gimme after his give-and-take brawl with Wladimir Klitschko in April. Pulev (25-1, 13 KOs) was manhandled by Klitschko, who stopped him in five rounds in 2014, but has rebounded with five consecutive victories. The 36-year-old Bulgarian is big (6 feet 4½ inches, around 250 pounds) and has skills, the product of a good amateur career. The problem is that Joshua is bigger, younger, fresher and punches much harder. Pulev has a monumental task ahead of him.
Predictions: Rosenthal – Joshua KO 7; Fischer – Joshua KO 7; Harty – Joshua KO 6; Coppinger – Joshua KO 5

OCTOBER 3 – Devon Alexander vs. Walter Castillo, welterweights, TBA (PBC on Fox Sports / Fox Deportes).

OCTOBER 7 – Chris Eubank Jr. (No. 7) vs. Avni Yildirim, super middleweights (World Boxing Super Series), Stuttgart, Germany.

OCTOBER 7 – Anthony Crolla (No. 9) vs. Ricky Burns, lightweights, Manchester, England.

OCTOBER 13 – Fidel Maldonado Jr. vs. Ismael Barroso, junior welterweights, Indio, Calif. (ESPN Deportes).

OCTOBER 13 – "Boxeo Telemundo."

OCTOBER 14 – George Groves (No. 3) vs. Jamie Cox, super middleweights (for Groves' WBA title, World Boxing Super Series), London.

OCTOBER 14 – Leo Santa Cruz (No. 1) vs. Chris Avalos, featherweights (for Santa Cruz's WBA title), Carson, Calif. (TBA). Also, Abner Mares (No. 5) vs. Andres Gutierrez, featherweights; Jermell Charlo (No. 2) vs. Erickson Lubin (No. 8), junior middleweights (for Charlo's WBC title); Jarrett Hurd (No. 6) vs. Austin Trout (No. 5), junior middleweights (for Hurd's IBF title); Erislandy Lara (No. 1) vs. Terrell Gausha, junior middleweights (for Lara's WBA title).

OCTOBER 19 – "Golden Boy Boxing on ESPN" (ESPN Deportes).

OCTOBER 20 – "Boxeo Telemundo."

OCTOBER 21 – Zhanat Zhakiyanov (No. 3) vs. Ryan Burnett (No. 6), bantamweights (for Burnett's IBF and Zhakiyanov's WBA titles), Belfast, Northern Ireland.

OCTOBER 21 – Cecilia Braekhus vs. Mikaela Lauren, welterweights (for Braekhus' IBF, WBA, WBC and WBO titles), Stokke, Norway.

OCTOBER 22 – Hassan N'Dam (No. 7) vs. Ryota Murata (No. 8), middleweights, Tokyo.

OCTOBER 27 – "Boxeo Telemundo."

OCTOBER 28 – Liam Smith (No. 7) vs. Liam Williams, junior middleweights, Newcastle, England. Also, Thomas Patrick Ward vs. Sean Davis, junior featherweights.

OCTOBER 31 – Jessie Magdaleno (No. 2) vs. Cesar Juarez, junior featherweights (for Magdaleno's WBO title), Newcastle, England, Also, Artur Beterbiev (No. 4) vs. Enrico Koelling, light heavyweights.

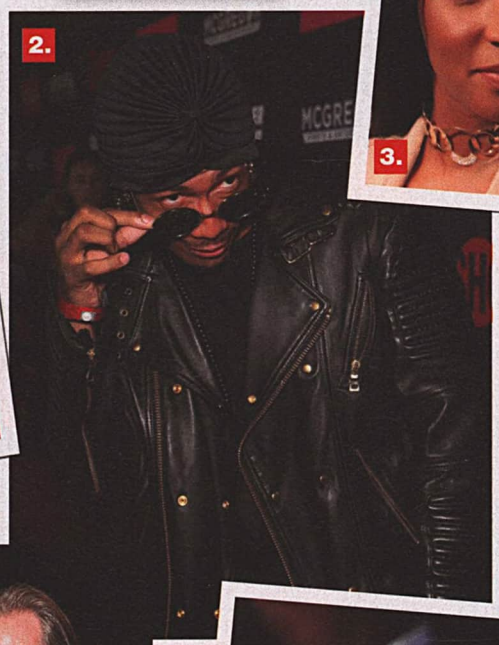
OH BROTHER

No brother act ever made a bigger impact in boxing than Wladimir (right) and Vitali Klitschko. The Klitschkos, both of whom are now retired after Wladimir's announcement in August, dominated the heavyweight division for most of 15-plus years as a result of sheer size, painstaking work and perhaps underappreciated ability. Vitali won a major title in 1999 (the year this photo was taken) and Wladimir lost his belts to Tyson Fury in November 2015. Between those dates, there was only a 15-month period (in 2003-04) in which neither fighter held at least one major title. They had their disappointments. Wladimir was stopped three times before he settled into his historic 9½-year run as champion, while Vitali had to overcome numerous injuries. Still, the results were striking: They finished a combined 109-7 (94 knockouts). That's domination. RING

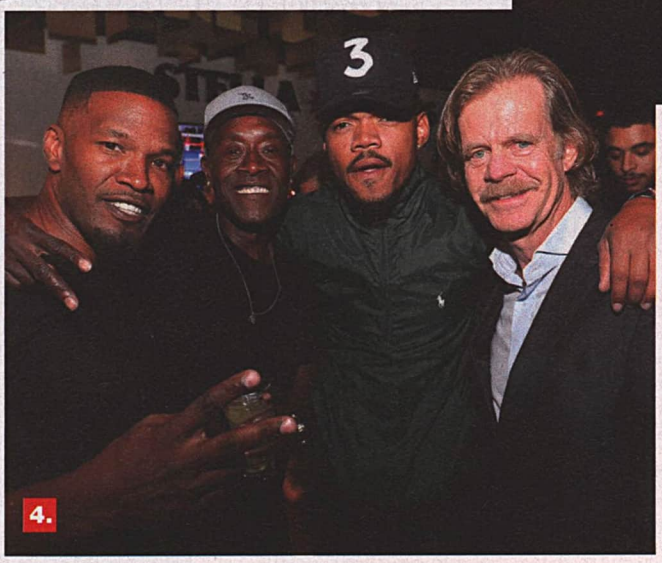
#ATTHEFIGHTS

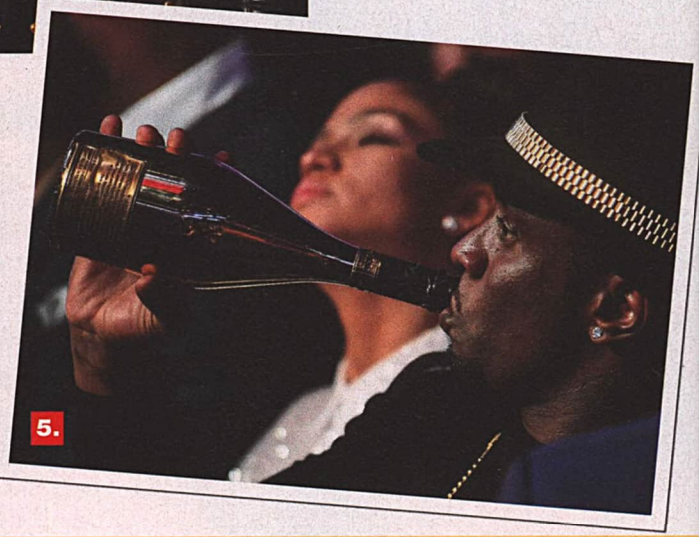
By **Lamar Clark**

STYLES MAKE FIGHTS



Mayweather-McGregor brought out the stars. 1. Rapper Cardi B; 2. actor Nick Cannon; 3. NBA star LeBron James and wife Savannah; 4. (left to route) actor Jamie Foxx, actor Don Cheadle, Chance the Rapper and actor William H. Macy; 5. hip-hop mogul Sean "Diddy" Combs.





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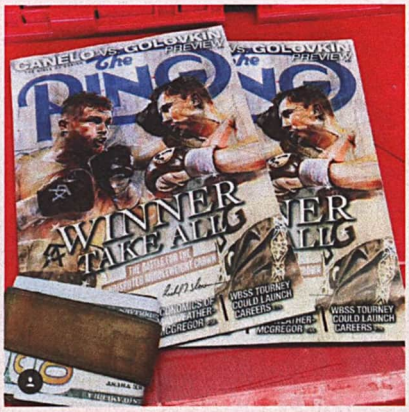

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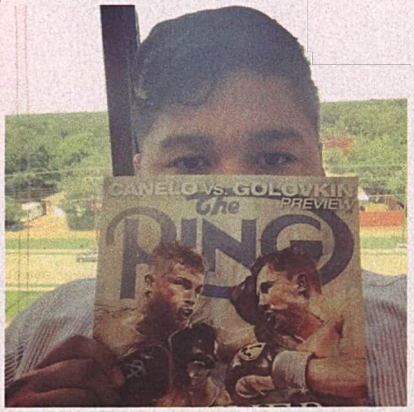

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